

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## College for Women

JOHN CIARDI

The lion hunter's second child  
did honors work on Oscar Wilde  
and means to start her A.M.  
The pirate's daughter spends his loot  
whirling in a black union suit  
through dreams of Martha Graham.

The duckling of a famous quack  
with factories on the Merrimac  
has memorized la Barrett.  
The heiress of a fighting prude  
is spending evenings in the nude  
in someone's abstract garret.

The queer one of a headlined blonde  
who buys her way through the *haut monde*  
is fiercely for the masses.  
The first born of a high divine  
is taking a peculiar line  
and cutting half her classes.

Oh air-conditioned halls of stone  
they have no child who live alone;  
they even pay their bills.  
Oh flesh bestirred to meet and mate  
they live alarmed who procreate;  
they rear the thought that chills.

Thus the parents who drive through:  
"What have we done? What shall we do?"  
Parents, why ask me?—  
Generation takes its course.  
Every child sues for divorce.  
Love 'em and leave 'em be.

# The Moderate Poetical Success of Stephen Spender

WILLIS D. JACOBS

**H**AS EVER distinguished poet attempted so much and accomplished so little? Of course if one counts the sheer bulk of Stephen Spender's work—poems, essays, criticism, travelogue, autobiography, humorous squibs, lectures, and what not (he is tireless)—one is overwhelmed by the quantity done; yet the thought persists that we have from such an enormous mountain precious little mouse.

This is all the more puzzling because Spender is clearly gifted with sensitivity, intelligence, knowledge, courage, and industry. Is his comparative failure as poet due to insufficiency of poetic talent or to certain personal and literary flaws which cripple his gifts in the act? These are embarrassing questions, and only a real affection for the poet *manqué* and sympathetic human being that is Stephen Spender could encourage one to decipher this mystery.

Here is a man once hailed as the Shelley of our times. That was twenty and more years ago, and Spender is called our Shelley no more. Here is a man once the pride and enthusiasm of young political rebels and aspiring young poets. The first have abandoned him as he abandoned them; the second have turned, long since, to Dylan Thomas for what once they hungered to find in Spender. It is indeed too many years since Spender was welcomed as a brilliant new light in the world of poetry; he is now seen as both a much older man—as we all are—and a much lesser poet. This last is sad and perhaps not fully chartable, but Spender once appeared to possess such ability and still possesses such admirable qualities as artist and man that he deserves a tentative examination to discover, if may be, why

his success as poet has been moderate, or, perhaps, even tepid.

Reading affectionately through the poetry of this likeable and noble man, one does encounter here and there lines, even brief poems, of some charm and warmth. The pathos comes as one notes the brevity and scarcity. Frequently in longer works one winces over poem after poem spoiled as an entity by bathos, eruptions of false notes, and dismaying errors in taste—both in language and in the very structure of the poems.

His success, when he succeeds, generally arrives in stanzas of no more than twelve or fifteen lines, and yet there it is a success that leaves one touched, even haunted, but convinced that this is a pretty little talent, not a warm, rich, enduring gift. Such a successful poem, on its level of the not quite immemorial, is his "Discovered in Mid-Ocean." In this poem reminiscent of the Daedalus legend are a number of ramifications: Spender himself as an Icarus, political or poetical, aspiring to the stars, but failing and falling and wrecked; implications of man as artificer, whose mechanical inventions (like the aircraft here) serve both to raise him and destroy him; insinuations of man as creator of weapons (perhaps a war-plane here), destroying others with them, and himself destroyed in them. In short there is richness here, and one notes that, appreciates it, remembers the poem—and feels that it misses any true greatness. It is too mild and too timid. Spender's political poems are strident; his personal lyrics are weary.

Shelley too has some lines about a man lost at sea. His words seem almost commonplace:

Many a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of Misery,  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on—  
Day and night, and night and day,  
Drifting on his weary way....

But as one reads these simple words he feels a force of emotion—a surge of soul—flooding the lines. It is the great heart beat of Shelley. With Spender, however, there is generally a tiredness. The heart beats, but sadly, sluggishly. His is the lyrical poetry of the defeated. Not that defeat creates only weak verse; Thomas Hardy proves otherwise. Defeat is a powerful motive and noble quality too. Spender's defeat is the sapless defeat of mere and unstruggling surrender; from it comes poetry of wistfulness, not poetry of grief—poetry of charm, not poetry of passion and strength. Stephen Spender is the wistful poet.

He has written an excellent poem called "What I Expected." If society is changed, he tells us, it is not by a dramatic moment, but by the daily straining of suffering men, and meanwhile from them drop away courage, hope, and faith:

What I expected was  
Thunder, fighting,  
Long struggles with men  
And climbing....

What I had not foreseen  
Was the gradual day  
Weakening the will  
Leaking the brightness away....

This is moving, but once more the theme is of the hurt man, wincing at his hurt. I lost and it hurts; the world has changed and it hurts. Can superb poetry be written from this velleity? "Within my head, aches the perpetual winter Of this violent time," Spender sighs; and since we too have been frozen and betrayed by the ignoble days of this world we understand and feel affection for this spokesman of our dismay. Yet his simple wistfulness and regret have not led to poetry of the first rank.

In Spender's political verse—his call to reform or revolution—he found a real force and inspiration. For a period he discerned in Communism the means to a democratic and peaceful world. His political verse, however, was generally flawed by either crass tendentiousness or venal technique. That political verse can be effective and poetically true is apparent; one has only to recall Shelley again, or William Morris even in his blunter moments:

For that which the worker winneth shall  
then be his indeed,  
Nor shall half be reaped for nothing by him  
that sowed no seed.

The political verse of Spender is eloquent and imperfect. "The writer who grasps anything of the Marxist theory," he once wrote, "feels that he is moving in a world of reality and in a purposive world." This conviction lent him force but not poetic sureness. The wistfulness and hurt in the poetry that follows his Communist period probably have a dual cause—his disenchantment with that political doctrine, and his shamed awareness that he had often betrayed the integrity of poetry in his effort to preach. He had, thus, not really a poet's firm hand or great faith; he was poetaster instead. He had failed politically and poetically; he failed politically because, he had become convinced, he had mistaken the nature of Communism; he failed poetically because he was not a *natural* poet, one who knows spontaneously and strongly what poetry must be and what perjuries it must never allow itself. Spender became aware, that is, that he was a man with great yearning to be a poet, sensitivity to ideas and words, and insufficient poetic talent.

Once the political afflatus is past, the writer himself can see and flush at the poetic falseness at the end of "The Landscape Near an Aerodrome." A landing aircraft is described with eye, ear, and love:

More beautiful and soft than any moth

With burring furred antennæ feeling its  
huge path . . .

Gently, broadly, she falls,  
Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.

The plane passes over the bleak suburbs of the city, reaches the aerodrome, and frees its passengers. Up to the final stanza this is a poetically notable work. When Spender describes the wind-sleeve of the airport he does so with "I's" that picture its reaching height: "sleeves set trailing tall"—with the hissing of the wind in the "s's" as well. Describing the passengers peering down at the land he refers to their "eyes trained by watching"—creating an effective ambiguity: "eyes-strained by watching." Describing the frayed factory area, where amid ugliness men labor at producing objects of luxury like aircraft for others to enjoy, he puts his rage and hurt into monosyllables, the way men speak in pain: "Here they may see what is being done." Near the airport, chimneys poke into the sky, and Spender provides the words and letters that create the sight: "Chimneys like lank black fingers." The industrial area itself is called the "outposts of work," with the military term "outposts" indicating that the workers there suffer a life of military subservience, command, and regimentation. All this is poetically right. From the words we receive not only idea but picture, and not only idea and picture but an emotional response to both. Up to the last stanza the work is a beautiful and thoughtful poem contrasting the comfort of the few to the squalor of the many, the luxurious indolence of some to the drab cheerlessness of others. The poem has made its statement. But then comes—as so often with Spender's political verse—the jarring note, the poetical flaw. The final lines are:

Then, as they land, they hear the tolling bell  
Reaching across the landscape of hysteria  
To where, larger than all the charcoaled  
batteries  
And imaged towers against that dying sky,

Religion stands, the church blocking the  
sun.

Religion, we are suddenly told, blocks out the light; as an institution, the church abets industry to bring darkness to man. This may be so; but to say it here, at this time, in this poem, is poetically false. This is not a poem about the church; to thrust it in as an afterthought is a structural flaw that bespeaks an earnest and dedicated young man but also an imperfect artist.

So too with the bathetic poem called "The Funeral." In this appears an image of striking beauty—but in the wrong place and contrary to the sense of the poem as Spender conceived it. Spender is saying (as he has every right to say) that our times have new heroes, better heroes than those of our traditional past. These new heroes are the men whose labor produces the physical wealth of the world. Such men are more valuable, he says, than a classical culture "Mourned by scholars who dream of the ghosts of Greek boys." But in the same poem we are asked to mourn the death of a contemporary hero—a Stakhanovite: "This one excelled all others in making driving-belts." This disparity in language and imagery makes the Stakhanovite absurd. The beauty of the Greek image—its long vowels, the sweetness and solemnity of its sounds—engenders nobility and loveliness in the past, in the very era Spender is terming inferior through the rest of the poem. Spender's language contradicts his intention, and he is not artist enough to recognize and excise the fatal anomaly. He too, despite himself, mourns the ghosts of Greek boys more than he does the nameless fabricator of driving-belts, and so his language bears witness. Enamored with a lovely statement, he employs it, though its gravity and melody dwarf the other lines and turn to absurdity the expression Spender sought to make before it.

Similarly the poem called "Not Palaces"



ultimately disappoints because of false tone. It is a call to youth to change the world, to strive for economic betterment and human brotherhood. It is a cry for justice, equality, and love. Yet it ends:

Our program like this, yet opposite:  
Death to the killers, bringing light to life.

The paradox of stimulating brotherhood and love by wide-scale murder ("Death to the killers") is not resolved. Worse, it is not seen. What matters here is not so much the logical confusion; rather it is the artistic failing, the structural flaw whereby the final lines strike a note of murderous vindictiveness in a poem purportedly expressing high idealism and love of humankind. The contradiction is redoubled within the poem. In the new society, Spender writes at the beginning, there will be no people "ordered like a single mind." Some few lines later, nonetheless, he states: "Our goal which we compel: Man shall be man." If there is a difference between *order* and *compel*, surely it is the latter which is the more stern and inflexible. Spender, in short, asserts within a few lines that in his new world man will be *freed* for individual life and then *compelled* to accept goals set by others. Once more we have a contradiction which makes one feel that both as thinker and poet Spender is too frivolous.

What Spender often lacks, it appears, is the "fundamental brainwork" which D. G. Rossetti declared indispensable for a poet. Emotion he has; intelligent control over the structure and language of his poem he too frequently has not. Randall Jarrell had something like this idea in mind when he remarked of Spender:

Stephen Spender is, I think, an open, awkward, emotional, conscientiously well-intentioned, and simple-minded poet. To like his poems as much as we shouldn't, we need to respond to what they are meant to be, not to what they are—and it is surprisingly easy to do this. Most of his virtues and vices cluster around the word *sincere*. One likes his *Collected Poems* neither for their development

(most of his experience and intelligence are excluded from the poems, so any great development is impossible) nor for their general excellence, but for a few touching, truthful poems that seem the products of observation, moral insight, and inspiration. (*Harper's*, Oct. 1955, p. 100)

Once we approach Spender on his true level, we can enjoy him, even though we will occasionally wince. He is no Shelley; he has neither the power nor the instant swoop of that falcon. He is not even Auden; he has not the easiness and breadth of that bright-eyed sparrow. He lacks the gorgeous plumage of a Wallace Stevens. At his best, Spender is the poet who knows that our world, our sex, and our sorrows are ever with us and ever too much for us. He is essentially an elegist. Even his poems of celebration incline toward sadness. "I Think Continually of Those" appears an exhortation to action and the apotheosis of those

who in their lives fought for life,  
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.

It is a poem glowing with imagery from Freud and D. H. Lawrence—imagery not only of birth but equally of short life and of swift on-coming destruction. The blaze of the sun and the heat of fire burn throughout the poem. Those who were truly great are dead (perhaps Marx and Lenin, perhaps Shelley and Lawrence). They traveled but "a short while towards the sun"—consumed by the fire of their passage and by the blazing goal they approached. They "left the vivid air signed with their honor," but their life was brief as they flared into death.

In another place, Spender reminds us:

You were born; must die . . .

The miles and hours upon you feed.  
They eat your eyes out with their distance  
They eat your heart out with devouring need  
They eat your death out with lost significance.

And says finally that the song of life is

"Of love, of loneliness, of life being death."

To be at one's best the wistful elegist of man's loneliness and death is no dismal fate for a poet, even if it is not the highest either. Essentially that is Spender's achievement. He feels "The furious volleys of chariotting power Behind the sun, racing to destroy." He hears "the groaning of the wasted lives." He knows the horror of "incommunicable grief." He reflects

That the kingdom of heaven on earth must  
always

Reiterate the garden of Eden,  
And each day's revolution be betrayed.

Behind each man's mask Spender discerns the timorous, uncertain child. He recognizes that child, for he of course is the child. Like the child he seeks some warmth, some haven: "Come home at last; come, end of loneliness."

It is not a mean thing to be a minor poet. Stephen Spender belongs not with Shelley and Keats, but he can interest and please those who fondly remember poets as disparate as Fulke Greville, Sir John Davies, and Wilfred Owen.

#### A PEAL TOUR OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

About Easter, 1904, I received a telegram worded: "Please report at Axminster. One short for peal.—J. E. Baker." . . .

After an evening with the handbells and a good dinner, we set out next morning for Beaminster in a two-horse wagonette. We jogged along steadily and walked up the hills, eventually arriving at Beaminster with its glorious tower and a lovely ring of bells by Bilbie, which appears to be a maiden one. We started for Stedman Triples with Mr. C. Winney, of London, conducting. The music of the bells was glorious and the striking was all that Mr. Winney desired (which was saying a lot, as he was most particular as to the truth of a peal). All went well for 2¾ hours when our host, the tenor man, had a stroke and fell off the box. The rope took him up and dropped him again, while all the ropes were flying around in all directions. I was sent for a doctor, but he was out. We got our friend down the tower and put him in the wagonette and so back to Axminster.

Fortunately, he recovered sufficiently for us to spend another convivial evening. The next morning we started for Winsham. Here the tower is at the east end, at the chancel steps. A candelabra hung about a foot from the third and fourth ropes. We again started for Stedman and after half an hour's ringing I missed the sally and my rope became entangled in the candelabra which brought most of the lamp down and fairly "put the wind" up me. I felt still more in disgrace when Mr. Winney remarked, "Please try and ring Stedman!" After a clear up we started off again. This time we rang for close on three hours when the sixth rope broke. That put an end to peal attempt No. 2, and we returned to Axminster for another evening of good fare and handbell ringing.

The next day we were off to Crewkerne, another lovely tower and bells. The ringing here was glorious and the striking as near perfect as possible, so much so that our conductor remarked after the peal that everyone had done his best. This was the end of the week-end, and Mr. Winney went back to London well satisfied. But oh, what enjoyment we got out of it—the wagonette rides, late dinners and the good fellowship! This was the first of several outings I had in my younger days. Such was the result of being well known in the Exercise.

—L. A. WILSON, in *The Ringing World* (Official Journal of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers), 29 October 1954, page 689; reprinted by kind permission.

# Fielding's Digressions in *Joseph Andrews*

I. B. CAUTHEN, JR.

IN HIS *Henry Fielding* F. Homes Dudden has criticized the novel *Joseph Andrews* for four "evident" weaknesses. For him, the novel is "too rambling and haphazard," and its denouement is unsatisfactory; moreover, he censures Fielding for too frequently indulging "in farcical absurdities" in the episodes of the book. Finally, he condemns the "digressions":

the main narrative is interrupted by the interpolation of two independent stories—'The History of Leonora, or the Unfortunate Jilt,' and 'The History of Two Friends'—and by the extensive life-history of Mr. Wilson. The introduction of such digressions, though in accord with the common usage of the Spanish and French fiction-writers—to say nothing of earlier examples in classical epics, medieval romances, and Eastern tales—can hardly be justified on artistic grounds. Moreover, in the first of his intercalated stories (which is also the more interesting and humorous) Fielding absurdly causes the narrator to repeat no fewer than five whole letters from memory. Wilson's history, indeed, comprises some matter relevant to the plot . . . ; but it would have been definitely an advantage had the greater part of it been omitted. (I, 351-352)

Mr. Dudden's fellow-commentators agree with such a criticism of the digressions, although they advance various excuses for them. Ethel Thornbury, like Mr. Dudden, sees them as only a manifestation of the contemporary practice which had the sanction of epic usage; but she concedes that Fielding works them into his central story by making them "have an ethical bearing upon the problem of the hero's life." Cross, however, sees the stories introduced only to fill up an uneventful hour, although "at times perhaps Fielding lets his narrative stand perfectly still as a burlesque of the suspense characteristic

of Richardson." Saintsbury's excuse for them (in his *Everyman* introduction) is likewise traditional: "divagations of this kind existed in all Fielding's Spanish and French models, . . . [and] the public of the day expected them." But if these digressions can be defended on other grounds, we may be able to give them a virtue other than Saintsbury's "grand and prominent [one] of being at once and easily skippable."

The three stories are placed at almost regular intervals throughout the novel: Leonora's story appears in Book II, chapters 4 and 6, Mr. Wilson's life-history occurs in III, 3, and the story of Paul and Leonard in IV, 10. The third and last story is not finished, perhaps for a reason other than that Beau Didapper "offered a rudeness to [Fanny] with his hands," for which he received from Joseph "a sound box on the ear." The two completed stories and the interrupted third one, I believe, are closely related to Fielding's aesthetic theory of his novel—the exposure of ridiculous human frailty and folly. By holding "the glass to thousands in their closets, . . . they may contemplate their deformity, and endeavor to reduce it, and thus by suffering private mortification may avoid public shame." The novel, therefore, is designed both to entertain and, more importantly, to instruct by laying bare the "only true source of the ridiculous"—affectation. This affectation, according to Fielding, proceeds either from vanity or from hypocrisy: vanity makes men affect "false characters, in order to purchase applause," while hypocrisy is the concealing of "our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues" in an endeavor to avoid censure. Vanity is thus a disproportional exaggeration of a trait which, in itself, may be

virtuous enough; hypocrisy is the living lie.

From the discovery of this affectation [Fielding declares] arises the Ridiculous, which always strikes the reader with surprise and pleasure; and that in a higher and stronger degree when the affectation arises from hypocrisy, than when from vanity; for to discover any one to be the exact reverse of what he affects, is more surprising, and consequently more ridiculous, than to find him a little deficient in the quality he desires the reputation of.

If the "digressions" can be related to this theory which underlies the novel, they furnish their own justification.

The first story, told to while away a journey, concerns the lovely Leonora, "an extreme lover of gaiety" who never missed a public assembly "where she had frequent opportunities of satisfying a greedy appetite of vanity." She is attracted by Horatio, a young barrister, to whom she always listens attentively "and often smiled even when [his compliments were] too delicate for her comprehension." When Horatio proposes to her, Leonora is "covered with blushes" and refuses him with "as angry a look as she could possibly put on"—although, of course, she "had very much suspected what was coming." But eventually she accepts Horatio. At this inopportune moment, a stranger who owns a coach and six arrives in town and Leonora is attracted to him because of his pretty equipage. He is the French fop Bellarmine who immediately becomes interested in Leonora: she "saw herself admired by the fine stranger, and envied by every woman. . . . Her little heart began to flutter within her, and her head was agitated with a convulsive motion. . . . She could not disengage her thoughts one moment from the contemplation of [her present triumph]. She had never tasted anything like this happiness." Thus Bellarmine's gaiety and gallantry possessed the heart of the vain Leonora in a day, demolishing poor Hora-

tio's work of a year. Upon the advice of her aunt, Leonora jilts Horatio, who in turn wounds Bellarmine in a duel, which, of course, makes Leonora love her foppish heart-flutterer more than ever.

However, when Bellarmine goes to Leonora's father to draw up the marriage papers, he learns that he is to get Leonora without a shilling of dowry; he breaks off his engagement, and Leonora, broken-hearted over losing both him and Horatio, "left the place where she was the subject of conversation and ridicule" and retired to a small place in the country.

In this digression, Leonora is held up as an object of ridicule for her vanity in her beauty, her pleasure in being admired by other women for Bellarmine's attentions, her pride in his coach and six, his French clothes, his superficial culture, and for her refusal of the honest and unaffected Horatio. Bellarmine is the hypocrite—his love is not for Leonora, but for Leonora's father's money. He gives the appearance of a sincere lover, but he is in reality only a fortune hunter. The unmasking of the hypocrite and the exposure of Leonora's vanity carry out Fielding's general purpose for the novel in this digression.

In the same way, Mr. Wilson's story contributes to the general purpose. Like Leonora, Mr. Wilson is a vain young person who is excessively ambitious of obtaining a fine character. By frequenting public places in London, he learned to master "fashionable phrases, . . . to cry up the fashionable diversions, and [to know] the names and faces of the most fashionable men and women." His reputation for intrigue he made secure by writing letters to himself; his life was one of sauntering about the streets, going to coffee-houses, attending Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields, and indulging in small talk in drawing rooms. In such a life, he confesses, he admired himself. Nor was he unique: at the Temple, where he lived, he found the beaux "the affection

of affection." Here he met "with smart fellows who drank with lords they did not know, and intrigued with women they never saw." Where they talked and did nothing, Wilson seems to have done everything and talked little: he kept a series of mistresses, intrigued with the "wife to a man of fashion and gallantry," received "some advances . . . by the wife of a citizen," and fell in with "a set of jolly companions, who slept all day and drank all night." Later, he "became a great frequenter of playhouses" and continued to accomplish his own ruin until he could be saved only by the *deus ex machina* of a lottery ticket. He then reformed, married the woman who generously gave him the lottery ticket, and managed her father's estate until he saw he was no business man. He then retired to the country where he now leads an idyllic life with his family.

Midway in this story of a typical fop, Fielding gives us the moral of it and its purpose. By his observations of London life, Wilson concludes that

the general observation, that wits are most inclined to vanity, is not true. Men are equally vain of riches, strength, beauty, honours, etc. But these appear of themselves in the eyes of the beholders, whereas the poor wit is obliged to produce his performance to show you his perfection. . . . Vanity is the worst of passions, and more apt to contaminate the mind than any other: for, as selfishness is much more general than we please to allow it, so it is natural to hate and envy those who stand between us and the good we desire. Now, in lust and ambition these are few; and even in avarice we find many who are no obstacles to our pursuits; but the vain man seeks preeminence; and everything which is excellent or praiseworthy in another renders him the mark of his antipathy.

Wilson's story thus is the biography of a vain wit, a ridiculous, affected, and at times hypocritical fop. He suffers for his vanity, and the reader is both amused and instructed by the edifying account

of his own unmasking and his reform. He no more deserves Harriet Hearty than Dorimant in Etherege's *Man of Mode* deserves his Harriet. But he has sense enough to reform himself, even as Fielding's readers were encouraged to amend their ways by "private mortification."

The third story, the interrupted tale of Leonard and Paul, has reached its climax when Joseph Andrews throws the listeners into consternation by his defense of Fanny. Read to visitors by Parson Adams' small son, the story concerns a couple who bicker incessantly over every detail of their lives; a friend advises them on this marital problem, first telling the husband to surrender to his wife when he is most convinced that he is in the right. Unfortunately, he gives the same advice a little later to the wife, and consequently he finds himself "the private referee of every difference." When the couple, however, compare his decisions, they find he has decided in favor of each upon every occasion, and he becomes, of course, the only thing the couple has in common—a mutual enemy.

Here again, as in the stories of Leonora and of Mr. Wilson, is an exposure of vanity, this time about the vanity of being preëminently correct. Both Leonard and his wife are so insistent upon their correctness that they become equally vain: as Mr. Wilson had said, men are vain of "riches, strength, beauty, honours, &c." He could have easily added "and of truth as they want to see it." Certainly the vanity of Leonard and his wife contaminates their minds as they each seek preëminence over the other in each argument. Nor is the hypocritical attitude that their friend Paul proposes a solution to their vanity. Indeed, no solution is given, nor is there one to give except the self-reform or the consequent suffering that concludes the other two digressions that precede this one. No wonder Fielding, manipulating his characters, lets Didapper offer that rudeness to Fanny only to be rewarded



with a box on the ear. The conclusion of the story is for the reader to write: the way the reader lets the story end is an exercise in how well he has learned from what he has already read in the novel.

These three digressions, therefore, need not be so utterly condemned nor half-heartedly defended as they have been. Although they may not be as artistically successful today as they were in the eighteenth century, they are closely related to Fielding's aesthetic of the novel, the exposure of affectation that arises from vanity or hypocrisy. By the very nature of this relationship, they assume an artistic purpose that should be considered historically as well as in the light of Fielding's own avowed intention in writing the novel. And while the "digressions" probably cannot be made acceptable to modern aestheticians of the unified novel, they are far from the traditional digression—they are, instead, much more akin to the exemplum, a story told with moral intent. Although such a device had often been used in literature before the time of Fielding, there is no model as far as I know in the novel for such stories. In this genre-making novel Fielding uses three structurally discrete stories as a means of playing a variation upon a basic theme, hostility to pretension. He had no model in the young art of novel-making for this kind of thematic repetition, the exemplum whose characters, setting, and events are completely unconnected with

the main story.

Admittedly these digressions—or exempla—stand outside the episodic structure of the book, but they are discussions that go even beyond the announced theme of affection. They are concerned with three important phases of life which the novel proper cannot include. For here we have a discussion of courtship, of married life, and of the vain young man beginning his career. In these three discussions Fielding continues his exposure of affectation that underlies the whole novel; in the novel itself this exposure takes place in character and incident: Mr. Wilson may inveigh against vanity and Parson Adams, agreeing with him, may be vain enough to want to read a sermon on vanity; Peter Pounce may be the uncharitable hypocrite who would turn the poor out to pasture, an unmasking that drives Parson Adams from the carriage; Mrs. Slipshod may affect learning as Lady Booby affects chastity—they all are victims of Fielding's stripping of a character to its essentials. In the same way, these stories unmask the vices of hypocrisy and vanity in courtship, in marriage, and in the life of the rake. By their inclusion Fielding has doubled his emphasis on his theme—the laying bare of the only true source of the ridiculous. As Parson Adams commented upon Steele's *Conscious Lovers*, this novel—with its exempla—has things in it "solemn enough for a sermon."

### Shelley Seminar

RAYMOND ROSELIEF

*Place of death . . . two hundred miles from Anzio.*

The artless words trailed panic in their wake  
and struck the drowsing heart before my desk—  
I saw it break.

The youth in fading khaki raised his eyes  
to mine, a foxhole terror in their core.  
He fumbled for his scattered sheets of Braille  
and with a new white cane groped for the frightened door.

# Cortez—Not Balboa

C. V. WICKER

THAT the primary meaning of a poem so much read, discussed, and written about as Keats's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" could have been almost completely overlooked might appear improbable,<sup>1</sup> yet such a serious oversight has, I believe, long prevailed. The erroneous assumption that the basic metaphor of the poem is concerned with discovery *in the sense of finding what no one has ever found before* has obscured the reading of one of the most carefully integrated poems in English and is responsible for the widely held belief that Keats mistakenly wrote Cortez for Balboa. Arthur Palmer Hudson, for example, says in *The College Survey of English Literature*, "Note the images of immensity with which Keats interprets his experience of *discovering Homer* [my italics]: the heavens and a new planet, the ocean and the sky (Cortez silhouetted against both)." Again, in *The Mystery of Keats* (p. 100) J. M. Murry remarks, "The imagery of exploration and discovery is maintained from the beginning," and further on,

The discovery of poetry—the thing in itself and his own powers of it—the discovery of the moon, the discovery of the ocean. Since Nature and Poetry are one to him, why should not all these be the same? But how to express these as discoveries? The moon had been discovered—why not a new planet? The ocean had been discovered—why not the ocean when it was unknown. (p. 109)

This is confused and confusing. Except for the first two phrases, it demonstrates

how far afield the misreading of the poem as a metaphor of discovery in the usual sense can take one. Keats's sonnet does not express the delight of discovery as finding what no one has ever found before, but discovery as an apocalypse of the immense power, the grandeur, the permanence of poetry. It is not about the *discovery* of poetry (see line 1) in the way a new continent or ocean or heavenly body is discovered, not about the discovery of Homer (see line 5), or the discovery of Chapman (to whom Keats had just been introduced by Cowden Clarke); it is about wonderment, about the "shadow of a magnitude," as Keats calls it in the last line of the "Elgin Marbles" sonnet, about the aesthetic revelation of what poetry could be.

To read the poem as concerned with anything newly discovered, then, is quite misleading. Keats does not say that *stout Cortez* was the first white man to see the Pacific, nor does he equate the experience of Cortez with his own discovery of poetry, or of Homer. These were not new nor newly found by him or anyone else. His reading of Chapman was not his first acquaintance with Homer. Line 5 clearly notes previous knowledge of Homer through Pope, but since Keats had not previously fully appreciated Homer, the line is a damaging criticism of Pope's version. Compare Clarke's phrase about the passages they read from Chapman, "as we had scrappily known them in Pope's version." Not a few disparaging remarks about Pope's "Homer" must have passed between the two friends that night as they read scenes in the richer garb of Chapman, but these, fortunately or not, have not been set down. At any rate, the superiority of Chapman to Pope is the basis of Keats's whole

<sup>1</sup> The assurance that the basic meaning of the poem is beyond question is expressed by Lynn H. Harris: "The general or primary interpretation of this poem has long been established—if indeed it was ever in doubt." *Explicator*, IV, 5 (Mar. 1946), 35.

wonderful experience recorded in this poem. Keats's ecstatic delight and its consequences even beyond this sonnet have, however, been recorded. His "*wild surmise*" of Homer, of poetry, of the "*realms of gold*" resulted from these "touchstone" samplings just as Cortez "saw" the vast power and majesty of the Pacific from the portion of it visible from his vantage point, his "peak in Darien." Neither in October 1816, or at any other time for that matter, was Keats arrogant enough to claim "discovery" of Homer or of poetry. He was learning, and though almost divinely ambitious, he was always modest, always grateful to his teachers. "Never did I breathe its pure serene" pays tribute to Chapman and Homer, but claims no discovery. Nor do lines 11-14 claim any discovery for Cortez and his men.

The only previous statement I have seen that "the situations in the poem . . . are not of completely new and unexpected discoveries" is that by Charles C. Walcutt (*Explicator*, V, 8, June 1946, 56), but here, except as to Cortez, the full implications of this interpretation are not pursued.<sup>2</sup> In "Keats's Realms of Gold" (*PMLA*, 49, Mar. 1934, 246), Joseph Warren Beach seems aware of the problem but avoids the issue, and his reference to "the Spaniard" is equivocal. "It seems natural enough," he says, "for Keats to compare his own discovery of Homer with the Spaniard's discovery of the Pacific Ocean." However "natural" or otherwise a great poet's use of metaphor ever is, Keats makes no such comparison. Nothing in the context of the article makes clear whether Beach meant Balboa or Cortez, but in either case the interpretation misses the poem. Keats meant Cortez. His reading of Robertson told him

that Balboa, not Cortez, was the discoverer, but he was not writing about discovery in that sense. What Keats or any other schoolboy reads about Balboa's discovery of the Pacific, thrilling as the account may be, is a pale experience compared to one's own first view of that mighty ocean, in the same way that knowing Homer only or mainly through Pope was unexciting indeed for Keats compared to what he felt and envisioned when he "looked into" Chapman.

The meticulous phrasing of Keats's title (not to mention the absence elsewhere in all his poetry of another blunder comparable to writing Cortez for Balboa) should, but probably will not, help to end the distressing Balboa discussion, which has invoked so much metrical, historical, and scientific ingenuity<sup>3</sup> without aiding critical interpretation. The title is "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," and Chapman as the means of revelation is of first importance. Neither Keats nor Chapman is a discoverer in the sense that Balboa was, but *through* Chapman there was revealed to Keats the sort of eagle-eyed vision that Cortez experienced when he "star'd at," not discovered, the Pacific. "Eagle eyes" was a most significant emendation for "wond'ring eyes" of the first draft. Would not Hunt, who commented on the "vague" comparison of "realms of gold" to poetry, on the imperfection of the rime "mean"/"domesne," on Titian's portrait of Cortez as a source for "eagle eyes," and who printed the poem in *The Examiner*, would not he have noted the "mistake" had there been one? Would not Clarke have seen it, the mentor of the poet and the recipient of the poem? Neither Keats nor any of his friends saw the "mistake," which remained undiscovered until Tennyson pointed out to Palgrave, "History requires here Balboa" (*The Golden Treasury*, Boston, 1869, p.

<sup>2</sup> My own discussion of the poem has grown from a suggestion in a paper by a former student, Marjorie Ann Fraser, who also saw that Keats did not intend Cortez to be taken as the original discoverer of the Pacific.

<sup>3</sup> See T. O. Mabbott, *Explicator*, V, 3 (Dec. 1946), 22; Amy Lowell, *John Keats* (1925), I, 41-42.

391). Suppose no mistake, and the "wild surmise" is no less moving because Keats and Cortez were *not* first discoverers.

The same semantic confusion results from misreading the skywatcher metaphor. Keats implies neither an astronomer nor scientific knowledge of the heavens. What Keats thought about philosophy, including natural philosophy, is well known, notwithstanding Bonnycastle. The travel imagery of the octet suggests a navigator, possibly Cortez. In the article already cited, Beach hints that a navigator is intended. Even more plausibly, it seems to me, Keats may have recalled "the Man of Mind" of the note to *The Excursion* which Wordsworth quoted from William Gilbert and which Richard Garnett suggested as a source for Keats. It is worth while to quote this note, not as it is given by Amy Lowell (I, 182)—who, quoting from de Selincourt's edition of *The Poems of John Keats*, gives only the first part of the note, and that with omissions—but essentially as Keats doubtless read it.

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a free-man in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exultation is not less than imperial. He is

as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially: his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars."—From the notes upon "The Hurricane," a Poem, by William Gilbert. (Wordsworth, Cambridge ed., p. 867)

And, for good measure, Wordsworth's lines in *The Excursion* (928-943) to which the above passage is a gloss may well be considered:

But contemplations, worthier, nobler far  
Than her destructive energies, attend  
His independence, when along the side  
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream  
That spreads into successive seas, he walks;  
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,  
And his innate capacities of soul,  
There imaged: or when, having gained the  
top

Of some commanding eminence, which yet  
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys  
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast  
Expanse of unappropriated earth,  
With mind that sheds a light on what he  
sees;

Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,  
Pouring above his head its radiance down  
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

That there is much both in Wordsworth's lines and in the note that could not help capturing Keats's imagination seems most patent. Lines 9-10 of Keats's sonnet carry no sense of discovery or of scientific knowledge, in spite of the adjective "new." The whole point to be considered is *new to whom and in what sense new*, and in *what degree*. The word "ken" is important far beyond its rhyming function; it means *range of sight, insight, understanding*, but hardly *discovery* as first finding. It is not, however, as Amy Lowell mistakenly decides, the use of "ken" that

points to the Wordsworth note as a source so much as the whole purport of the passage and such phrases in the note as "rests his eye," "contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific," "feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre," "his exultation is not less than imperial." There is nothing in the note about discovery any more than there is in the passage in *The Excursion*, which is much closer to what Keats so magnificently expressed in his sonnet than has previously been noted. Indeed, both Wordsworth's lines and his note may well have provided strong hints for Keats, especially as evidence amply shows that Wordsworth was much more in Keats's mind at this period than was either Bonnycastle or Robertson, remembered as they undoubtedly were.

On Wednesday, 9 October 1816, in a letter to Clarke, Keats wrote, ". . . it is no mean gratification to become acquainted with Men who in their admiration of Poetry do not jumble together Shakespeare and Darwin." (The occasion was a proposed visit to Hunt.) We may be very sure that Keats, who invariably spoke about poetry with the sincerest conviction, would not have violated this precept within the month. Just as "ken" does not reflect discovery, so "swims," magical as poetry, is not an astronomical term. The comparison is not to discovery, but to revelation, insight, wonderment, "wild surmise." The "eagle eyes" do not scan the world to locate a new ocean nor the skies to find a new planet. To suggest so would be absurd. They drink in majesty, power, vast and permanent beauty. Such eyes belong to the "mind that sheds a light on what he sees;/Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun."

"Then felt I" voices exultant wonderment at rich and lasting beauty, not simply finding. That Keats would regard imaginative insight as a higher and worthier function of the mind, the Poet's mind, than the ability or good fortune to

find even the largest of oceans or the most dazzling of new planets is quite understandable. "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time," written the following February, contains such suggestively parallel images as to offer what amounts nearly to corroboration: "First Time," "pinnacle and steep," "eagle looking at the sky," "Grecian grandeur," "billowy main," "sun," "shadow of a magnitude."

Too much has also been made of the political significance of such words as "realms," "states," "kingdoms," "fealty," "ruled," and "demesne" in the octet of the sonnet on Chapman's Homer. Keats was as little interested in politics as in science. He merely adopted an appropriate and very effective metaphor for extending his experience of poetry through reading. He was, however, always deeply concerned with time, with the tragedy of impermanence in human affairs and with the beauty of permanent art. The strongest connotations of this sonnet are of the glorious scope and endurance of poetry. The octet builds a time and space progression that is carried on into the sestet—Homer, Chapman, Keats; ancient, Renaissance, modern;<sup>4</sup> land, sea, sky—in preparation for the last two metaphors, which climax the poem in terms of apocalyptic insight. Line 8 turns the sonnet with a skill Keats had not previously attained, with a perfection, indeed, rarely matched in English poetry. The force of "Till" centers the time progression of the whole sonnet. The "realms of gold" are permanent, just as to Keats also is the Pacific, "pure serene." Homer and the "realms of gold"

<sup>4</sup>Harris points to the importance of the time relations in the poem, but I think concludes wrongly "that Keats may well have intended a juxtaposition of the medieval and the Renaissance, mediated by Homer." It seems clear that Chapman (the Renaissance—Cortez, "watcher of the skies") mediates between Keats and poetry (Homer, "realms of gold"). This is not to suggest that Keats deliberately worked a historical concept into the poem, but merely that the time relationship is an essential part of the central metaphor of revealed beauty.



are brought into perfect unity with "Pacific" first by "wide expanse" and then by "pure serene." Beach has noted the semantic relationship between *pacific* and *serene*. The sky and sea images, in their Renaissance setting, communicate unbounded mental and emotional wonderment.

The combined and integrated time-space movement represents the "realms of gold," lasting and limitless beauty, and conveys not discovery, but revelation through imaginative sight and insight of the scope and permanence of poetry. One need not be an astronomer to feel awe upon seeing a new planet, nor Balboa to respond to the immense sweep of the

Pacific. Keats tells us that his experience was like that of Cortez, like that of the watcher of the skies. The means by which each "saw" the object of his wonderment is imagination. Thus "peak in Darien" is the means, what Chapman's Homer was to Keats—the necessary vantage point. The linking word is "gold"—to Cortez real, tangible, to be ruthlessly sought; to Keats not wealth nor worldly dominion, but poetry, imagined and created beauty, limitless, perdurable. Only when the idea of discovery is abandoned and the poem is seen as a carefully integrated metaphor of personal, intuitive revelation of poetry as "high romance" can the sonnet be clearly and fully read.

## NCTE College Section—1956 Nominations

In May, Council members of the College Section will receive mail ballots for electing three members of the Section Committee, two directors of the Council to represent the Section, and eight editorial advisors for *College English*. The nominations are listed below.

S. D. STEPHENS (Newark C. of Rutgers), *Chairman*

HAROLD B. ALLEN (U. of Minnesota)

WILLIAM M. GIBSON (New York U.)

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Robert M. Estrich (Ohio State U.)

Frederic E. Faverty (Northwestern U.)

King Hendricks (Utah State Agr. C.)

William S. Ward (U. of Kentucky)

James Work (Indiana U.)

### COUNCIL DIRECTORS REPRESENTING THE COLLEGE SECTION (2)

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### COLLEGE ENGLISH ADVISERS (1 in each category)

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Robert Heilman (U. of Washington)

Louis Rosenblatt (New York U.)

#### WORLD LITERATURE

Lillian Hornstein (New York U.)

Louis G. Locke (Mary Baldwin C.)

#### RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

Eleanor T. Lincoln (Smith C.)

Rosemond Tuve (Connecticut C.)

#### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

Frank L. Huntley (U. of Michigan)

#### FICTION

Ronald F. Crane (U. of Chicago)

Cecil Williams (Oklahoma A. & M.)

#### MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Morton Bloomfield (Ohio State U.)

John Fisher (Duke U.)

#### CURRICULUM

Peter Donchian (Wayne U.)

Lewis Freed (Purdue U.)

#### COMMUNICATION

Beverly E. Fisher (Santa Monica City C.)

Harrison Hayford (Northwestern U.)

# Aldous Huxley's Attitude Toward Duration

MARGARET CHURCH

ALDOUS HUXLEY's attitudes toward time and space have been, of course, much influenced by his personal adjustments to life. His early disillusionment with Victorian values led to his clinging to the reality of object and event although beneath this attitude one senses a fear of the crumbling of the outer world. As a result of his attitude toward object and event, Huxley, in his early novels and essays rejects Bergson's philosophy of time as discontinuous; furthermore, Proust's chief significance for the early Huxley lies in the concrete realm of his magnificent psychological analyses. In *Proper Studies* Huxley points out an inconsistency in Proust's recalling of the past. He shows that Proust does not actually recall the past into the present because after the experience the individual is different from the way he was before he recalled the incident. This leads, says Huxley, to a sense of discontinuity in Proust's work. Bergson's philosophy is also vitiated by the same inconsistency, and, according to Huxley, Bergson (together with Romain Rolland) has fostered a "cult of the emotions" in the twentieth century. However, it seems that Bergson precludes Huxley's argument, for he writes in *Creative Evolution*: "We could not live over again a single moment, for we should have to begin by effacing the memory of all that had followed." Bergson's definition of duration is that the past *exists* in the present, is preserved in the present. Thus when the *madeleine* recalls for Proust's hero an earlier scene, the hero *does* change as a result of the experience because the past *is* the present and the present brings change. Proust's various catalysts serve not to produce dis-

continuity, but to show the true nature of the present, of duration; Huxley's conception of Proust's discontinuity arises from his attempt to see past and present as separate whereas the Bergsonian sees them as coexistent, simultaneous, and homogeneous.

Huxley's observing in duration a past and a present distinct from each other underlines his early necessity for a time medium which is reassuringly in order. But ironically enough, Bergsonian philosophy, unlike other time philosophies, sees duration as reality. That Huxley rejected this reality and later accepted mysticism is an interesting point. There seems, in fact, to be a relation between the attitude which accepts object and event as the ultimate reality and that which claims that object and event have no reality at all. Both attitudes occur in the temperament which tends to see either black or white, but few colors. The Bergsonian philosophy synthesizes the claims of the body and the claims of the spirit; mysticism separates them. Thus we see in Huxley one who prefers philosophic extremes to the middle.

But actually Huxley could never accept the Bergsonian concept of time because Bergson's definition rests on the reality of the psychical process, whereas the early Huxley insists that time and space have an existence outside of human perception of them. Huxley's reliance on the absolute nature of time and space in his early works has a two-fold origin. It results both from his sense of the need for something concrete to cling to, now that so many of his early cornerstones have crumbled, and paradoxically from his deeper sense that since even time and

space are not solid, he must insist that they are. Under his early rejection of the time-relativists lie many unconscious fears that they are right or that they may disturb his world of negation; thus we see his violence in contradicting them in remarks which air his scatological tendencies. For instance, he refers to Proust squatting in the tepid bath of his remembered past or compares Bergson's *élan vital* to seething pigs in a marketplace.

But in spite of Huxley's adherence in his early books to the doctrine of a three-dimensional existence, there are behind this adherence such very real insecurities in regard to time and space that his acceptance of mysticism is almost inevitable. And by accepting mysticism he does not disturb his defense mechanism of the absolute quality of the outer world. Rather, he establishes another defense mechanism in adopting the timelessness of the perennial philosophy. In *Time Must Have a Stop* there are two worlds between which Uncle Eustace shuttles. Huxley distinguishes between "eternity philosophers" and "time philosophers"; he now rejects the importance of human time except as a step which would lead to the reality of the timeless spirit.

Huxley's own discontinuity is clear when we see (as D. S. Savage points out) that in the earlier period he creates a dualism between the ideal and the actual, and in the later period between the human and the non-human. A difference between these dualisms lies in his present point of view as a "positive accentuation of futility" and in his early point of view as a negative accentuation of futility. In both periods Huxley would reject *duration*, which merges the ideal and the non-human with the actual and the human. Thus it seems to be Huxley who is discontinuous, and not Proust. In fact, we have it from Huxley's own pen in *Eyeless in Gaza* that life is hardly more than "a pack of snapshots in the hands of a lunatic." Huxley's failure to apply Proust's

method with success and his frequent awkwardness in juggling with time spring from his basic disagreement with the Bergsonian concept that duration is real.

Huxley's rejection of the concept of duration may be illustrated by a discussion of two of his most frequently read novels: *Point Counterpoint* and *Eyeless in Gaza*. In *Point Counterpoint* one finds a good many Proustian parallels, but ones that usually mock the Proustian method. Furthermore, they are inserted in a mechanical fashion here and there in the novel and do not by and large either expand or condense the time experience as Proust's explorations into the past do. For Walter Bidlake, the catalyst is an offensive old man, in contrast to the *madeleine* or sound catalysts used by Proust. Suddenly Bidlake is nine years old, walking with his mother to visit Wethrington, the undergardener, who is ill. He remembers the staring eyes, the clammy white skin, the skeleton hands, and the stale air of the sickroom. He longs to get into the fresh air, for Mrs. Wethrington's grief only embarrasses him.

The scene in which Spandrell, inspired by a lamp post, finds himself in the snow-covered pass where he had been as a boy is further proof of Huxley's ridicule of the Proustian method. Had it been Rampion instead of the decadent Spandrell to whom this experience occurred, one could interpret it as more significant.

However, Huxley's attitude toward Proust throughout the book is a caustic one. Molly d'Exergillod, a professional conversationalist who practices her repartee in bed before she gets up and who records witticisms and anecdotes in a diary, has married into a family which "has won the distinction of being mentioned in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*." And Mark Rampion, the positive character in *Point Counterpoint*, pronounces Proust's "horrible great book" "an endless masturbation."

These examples are climaxed by the

description of Lucy Tantamount's laugh: her painted lips against her pale gums transport Philip Quarles without transition to the palace gardens at Jaipur when the crocodiles are fed. He sees the insides of their mouths, like "slightly glacé cream-coloured kid."

Aside from the fact of ridicule, these experiences do not catch the essence of the Proustian recall of the past, for they remain within the framework of clock time instead of producing a sense of the flow of mind time which stands behind the concept of duration. Huxley removes a scene from the past and places it in the present. Because he is involved with clock time (motion through space) he has no other choice, hence the discontinuous nature of these episodes. Proust, on the other hand, grasps the essence of duration which creates for him a new artistic medium wherein past and present merge and flow into each other enabling him to reproduce the climate and conditions of the human mind.

Nor, in fact, is the contrapuntal nature of *Point Counterpoint* an example of duration. Huxley plays with time as if he were rearranging objects—first Walter Bidlake and Marjorie, then Tantamount House and Lord Edward in his laboratory, next Philip and Eleanor in India. The sense of ubiquity achieved by Joyce, for instance, is lacking; in Joyce there is no sense of rearrangement or juxtaposition of planes of experience, for to Joyce chronology in the conventional sense is meaningless and duration is real.

Another interesting insight into Huxley's method comes from Philip Quarles's notebook. Not only should an artist see an event through the eyes of biologist, chemist, bishop, and historian, but he should be able to look through any particular object or experience, to render it diaphanous, so that in a single object one may see the entire universe. "The artistic problem is to produce diaphanousness in spots, selecting the spots so as to reveal

only the most humanly significant of distant vistas behind the near familiar object." Quarles's idea of diaphanousness may seem at first to be akin to Proust's theory of past experiences hidden in an object and brought to consciousness by a sudden flash of insight as one tastes, hears, or smells the object. The difference is that Quarles wishes to see the historical past in any object, whereas Proust has a character experience his personal past through an object. From the smell of roast duck in an old kitchen Quarles would glimpse spiral nebulae, Mozart's music, the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi. Thus he steps outside of individual experience to glimpse racial experience and by so doing objectifies the time values so that the character by an intellectual process is reminded of earlier events but does not *re-live* them as Proust's character does. Quarles himself suspects that this diaphanousness could not be achieved without pedantry. Quarles's point of view is Huxley's, for neither one sees coexistence of past and present—only a transparent quality in the present which may allow certain past events to filter through.

In *Eyeless in Gaza* as in *Point Counterpoint* Huxley chooses to juxtapose scenes and events occurring in separate circumstances and to diverse characters. Here, however, the discontinuity is even more marked than in the earlier novel. D. S. Savage suggests that by his method Huxley emphasizes the sense of discontinuity in the existence of Anthony Beavis. And it is true that the unity which Anthony discovers in the last chapter is in sharp contrast to his sense of life as he looks at some old photographs in an early scene: "Somewhere in the mind a lunatic shuffled a pack of snapshots and dealt them out at random, shuffled once more and dealt them out in different order, again and again, indefinitely. There was no chronology."

These words describe the time scheme behind the book. The chapters are headed

by dates, and the dates are "dealt out at random" so that we move backward and forward with no regard for the conventions of time. Huxley has here pushed the method used in *Point Counterpoint* a step further; even transitions between chapters are, for the most part, abolished. Still he does not achieve a sense of ubiquity, chiefly because although dates are shuffled, we are still aware of chronology in the conventional sense. The use of dates for chapter headings makes us aware that we are in the realm of clock time, and the mind of the reader rearranges the cards in order despite the author.

And as for Proust and Bergson, they receive no more respect in this novel than in the earlier book despite haunting Proustian parallels. In the opening pages there is a picture of Proust as "that asthmatic seeker of lost time squatting, horribly white and flabby," and Bergson is ridiculed as the favorite philosopher of Brian. Huxley feels that it is a misfortune that present events sometimes invoke the past. A woman's body seemingly "uncompromisingly there" reminds Anthony of earlier occurrences. The smell of Helen's skin "at once salty and smoky" transports him "instantaneously to a great chalk-pit" where he had spent an hour with Brian striking flints. Later, Helen's body, brown and flat like a Gauguin, transports him to a picture gallery in Paris where Mary Amberly is showing him his first Gauguin. These scenes give us another insight into Huxley's rejection of duration, for he views the past here as full of pitfalls, reminders of guilt, Brian, and Mary Amberly. In *Eyeless in Gaza* almost all the recreations of the past are painful ones. The noise of jackdaws over the church where his mother's funeral is taking place reminds Anthony of his mother's protest when he had flung stones on a frozen pond. The pain of the scene on the roof with Anthony reoccurs to Helen many years later in the station at Basel and causes her to wince. Huxley prefers, then,

the oblivion of clock time in which the past recedes ever farther from our sense.

If there seems to be an inconsistency in Huxley's using Proust's method at all in *Eyeless in Gaza*, it is explained by Huxley's interest in a technique which offered new artistic possibilities, not in any basic agreement with Bergsonian principles. Therefore, these incidents in which the past is recalled often sound like interpolations, not integral parts of the plot.

But in addition to the theories of time which look backward to Huxley's earlier work, we find also in *Eyeless in Gaza* a new element which Huxley develops fully in his later books. The early glimmerings of Huxley's mysticism are exemplified by Anthony Beavis. "God is not limited by time. For One is not absent from anything, and yet is separated from all things." This contemplation of unity in diversity which begins for Anthony at the dinner party given by Gerry Watchett receives adult confirmation in the person of the Scotchman, James Miller. By allying himself with Miller, Anthony fulfills the destiny which Brian's death has laid at his feet. In Miller's philosophy Anthony discovers the unity of life; he achieves release with his liberation from the consciousness of being separate, and he departs for his meeting in the last chapter with a serene sense of well being. Time here is the timeless present, and yet in no way disturbs the Huxleyian conception of the reality of clock time, the absolute nature of which is for Huxley indissoluble but which may be ignored through a contemplation of the "timeless present."

Thus we can see that Huxley's reliance on an absolute and abstract concept of time has materially affected the style, structure, and content of his work. A clever journalist, a raconteur, he does not record the ubiquity of human experience, but intellectualizes life in concrete terms, and later leaving this life to its devices, steps outside of it to proclaim a reality of timelessness.



# Trollope as Social Anthropologist

WILLIAM COYLE

THE COMMUNITY study, an intensive analysis of a small area, is currently a favorite project of social scientists, especially anthropologists,<sup>1</sup> who find the supply of primitive communities running low. After selecting a community and assigning it an imaginary, but decidedly not imaginative, name like Factory City or Jonesville (sometimes called an *urbanonym*),<sup>2</sup> the social anthropologist seeks by means of interviews, observation, and study of local documents to discover the distinctive *culture-patterns*. His findings usually consist of ingenious generalizations expressed in impressively technical language and supported by statistics, diagrams, descriptions of typical behavior, and *verbalizations* (self-revealing comments).

To what extent will data accumulated by methodical procedures and described by specialized terminology resemble the invention of a novelist frequently praised as a social historian—Anthony Trollope? How much of Trollope's representation of Barsetshire would be considered significant by a modern social anthropologist equipped with graphs and questionnaires and engaged in preparing a study to be entitled, perhaps, *Cathedral City: An Analysis of Differential Status*?

The ideal role for a social anthropologist is invariably described as that of a

*participant-observer*. He must share as well as study the life of the community. After attending a fish-fry, a revival meeting, or a funeral, he rushes off to record his data. Though not a self-conscious investigator, Trollope qualifies as a participant-observer, for he lived imaginatively in the shire that he created:

... to me Barset has been a real county, and its city a real city, and the spires and towers have been before my eyes, and the voices of the people are known to my ears, and the pavement of the city ways are familiar to my footsteps. (*Chronicle*, III, 414-415)<sup>3</sup>

I had it all in my mind,—its roads and railroads, its towns and parishes, its members of Parliament, and the different hunts which rode over it. I knew all the great lords and their castles, the squires and their parks, the rectors and their churches. (*Autobiography*, p. 133)

Though they vary in technique and in terminology, virtually all community studies are essentially surveys of *social stratification* and *social controls*. Of the different formulas to determine class position, the most common is the use of *ratings*, a kind of supervised gossip in which persons are given cards bearing names of their fellow townsmen and are asked to sort them into like groups. This process is *prestigious ranking*. The researcher records the comments and tabulates the ratings. When he has sufficient evidence, he formulates a *status system* and analyzes it closely to determine the *configuration of traits* and the social com-

<sup>1</sup> I have used the uniform Dodd, Mead editions of the Barsetshire series, whose full titles are *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867).

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Allison Davis *et al.*, *Deep South* (1941); W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Yankee City*, 4 vols., (1941-47); August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (1949); W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Democracy in Jonesville* (1949); and Wayne Wheeler, *Social Stratification in a Plains Community* (1949).

<sup>2</sup> Few fields possess such an elaborate terminology. Even some social anthropologists have protested that their colleagues are given to "overconceptualization." I have italicized each of the technical terms on its first appearance.

trols within each group. The number of status groups varies from three to seven. The best known classification is that of *Yankee City*, which was satirized by Marquand in *Point of No Return* (1949); it divides a New England community into six groups: *upper-upper*, *lower-upper*, *upper-middle*, *lower-middle*, *upper-lower*, and *lower-lower*.

## II

In his own comments and through dialogue, Trollope refers constantly to class differences. A synthesis of his references indicates six groups: (I) Nobility, (II) County gentry and clerical dignitaries, (III) Professional men, (IV) Merchants and some farmers, (V) Lower orders, and (VI) Dependent persons. The status system is enormously complicated by the fact that it is superimposed on the entrenched hierarchies of church and state, which sometimes operate reciprocally and sometimes conflict.

Class I is headed by the Duke of Omnium, the Earl De Courcey, Lord Lufton, and the Earl De Guest, who lives in the next county. This group is less parochial than any of the others; a season in London and continental travel are common. Though she dislikes it, Lady Lufton visits London annually (*Framley*, I, 233). The arrogant rudeness that derives from conscious superiority is found only in Class I. Lord Porlock, for example, refuses an invitation to a celebration at Greshambury because "he never bored himself with those sort of things" (*Thorne*, I, 22). After inviting men to dine at the castle, the Duke of Omnium ignores them (*Thorne*, I, 321-330). The family in Class I is *male-dominated*; Lord De Courcey bullies his wife and daughters, and Lady Lufton is secretly fearful of her son's displeasure (*Framley*, II, 28). This dominance is partly due to the inheritance through the male line of wealth and of titles. Jealousies and suspicions related to inheritance may also account for the callous family

relationships. Lord De Courcey and his eldest son, Lord Porlock, hate each other and never meet (*House*, I, 236). A younger son may speculate cold-bloodedly on the life-expectancy of his elders: "There's Porlock's strong as a horse; and then George comes next. And the governor's good for these twenty years'" (*Thorne*, I, 65).

In all six status groups *social mobility* (the chance of moving upward or downward in the social scale) is exceedingly limited. Seldom does a person move further than to the adjacent class. Class I is the most rigid, almost a *caste* except for the fact that a woman can marry into it. Marriage is, in fact, a woman's most efficacious means of *vertical ascent*. A wife assumes her husband's rank. Thus, Griselda Grantley is elevated by marrying Lord Dumbello to such an eminence that her father is ill-at-ease in her presence (*House*, III, 234), and he opposes his son's marriage to Grace Crawley because he wishes "that his sons should be fitting brothers for their august sister" (*Chronicle*, III, 4).

Class II, which Trollope depicts most fully, consists of two segments: the county families headed by Mr. Gresham, "the first commoner of Barsetshire" (*Thorne*, I, 147; II, 281), and "the aristocracy of Barchester . . . the bishop, dean, and canons, with their respective wives and daughters" (*Warden*, p. 1). As in Class I there is considerable contact with the outside world. Travel outside England is rather rare, but even Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne spends a month or six weeks of each year in London (*Towers*, I, 266). London is a neutral ground where Barset animosities are temporarily suspended and Mrs. Grantley exchanges amenities with Mrs. Proudie (*Framley*, I, 251-52). Members of Class II are devoted to the *status quo*. Innovation is anathema; the arch-deacon is shocked by a new chintz sofa in the episcopal palace (*Towers*, I, 41). Dr. John Bold is not popular with people like

the Thornes of Ullathorne (*Towers*, II, 241), and even gentle Bishop Grantley calls the reforming physician a "pestilent intruder" (*Warden*, p. 37). At first, after her marriage to Dr. Thorne, Miss Dunstable is not accepted by the county families (*Chronicle*, I, 29).

The leisure enjoyed by most women in Class II is shown by the hobbies to which they devote themselves; Miss Trefoil, the dean's daughter, "a lady very learned in stones, ferns, plants, and vermin," has written "a book about petals" (*Towers*, I, 112), while genealogy is "the favorite insanity" of Miss Thorne (*Towers*, I, 272). Charitable excursions to the homes of the respectable poor are also a common avocation of women. Propriety within the family is observed most strictly; Mrs. Grantley has never addressed her husband by any term except "archdeacon" (*Warden*, p. 19), and Mrs. Proudie customarily calls her husband "my lord" or "bishop." Communication within the family is triangular; the children confide in the mother, who relays information to the father. Family dominance is feminine. Mrs. Gresham coerces her husband into three hopeless contests for Parliament (*Thorne*, I, 7). This control is kept private except in the Proudie household, where Mrs. Proudie reigns supreme and even the daughters exert authority over the bishop (*Towers*, I, 28). Charlotte Stanhope manages her family's affairs (*Towers*, I, 89), and in their dressing-room even the archdeacon hearkens to his wife's admonitions.

Since members of Class I (except for an occasional Griselda Grantley) inherit their status, Class II is the highest rank which an *aspirational person* can hope to achieve. There is, therefore, within Class II considerable emphasis on the *criteria of status*, the indices of social position which determine whether esteem is to be paid or withheld. The chief determinants of status in Barset are extrinsic symbols like noble or ecclesiastical rank, wealth (its extent, source, and use), family con-

nections, political and religious affiliations, and length of residence.

Wealth acquired commercially is tainted; land is its most desirable source and form. The Dales of Allington, just west of Barset, are proud that "no acre of the property had ever parted from the hands of the existing squire" (*House*, I, 2). As Archdeacon Grantley puts it, "land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and political power, to say nothing of the game" (*Chronicle*, III, 48). The clerical aristocracy of the city is powerful (*Thorne*, I, 2), but the "true aristocracy" is made up of landowners (*Thorne*, I, 15). Open-handedness in money matters commands respect; frugality is vulgar. The Duke of Omnium, who never speaks of money (*Framley*, II, 42), sets the tone. The parsimony of Mrs. Proudie arouses resentment; if her husband were not bishop, she clearly would not receive the respect accorded Class II. The son of a London tailor who has acquired wealth and a seat in Parliament is dismissed contemptuously by Mr. Gresham: "'We can't judge of those fellows as one does of gentlemen; they are so used to making money, and seeing money made, that they have an eye to business in everything'" (*Thorne*, I, 232).

Miss Dunstable and Lady Scatcherd illustrate the limited efficacy of wealth in procuring social advancement. Immense wealth makes each a free agent within the status system—a kind of sociological sport. Lady Scatcherd's response is negative: "'What do I care about down or up?'" (*Framley*, II, 220). Miss Dunstable is "quite able to hold her own in any class" (*Framley*, I, 354) and even the Duke of Omnium attends her evening reception, but she finds a congenial husband in Class III.

Family connection is an important criterion of status, but not if too remote. Dr. Thorne is merely a second cousin of the squire of Ullathorne and "therefore, though he was entitled to talk of the blood as belonging to some extent to him-

self, he had no right to lay claims to any position in the county other than such as he might win for himself . . ." (*Thorne*, I, 24). Conservative political views and moderately high church practices seem to receive the most respect; radicals and dissenters are not found in Classes I or II and seldom in III. Mr. Sowerby, with few claims to his neighbors' respect, occupies a superior position because his family has been long in the county (*Framley*, I, 32). Newcomers are suspect; John Bold does not take three fees in three years (*Warden*, p. 14).

Class III, comprised of doctors, attorneys, and the regular clergy, is the most ambitious. The contentions of clergymen, which Mr. Arabin defends (*Towers*, I, 256-60), and the machinations of Mr. Slope in seeking the dean'ship suggest aggressive ambition, as do the rivalries among the doctors. Each profession has its standards of dignity. Dr. Thorne shocks his compeers by acting as his own apothecary and by announcing a schedule of fees (*Thorne*, I, 39-40). A doctor may be judged by his carriage and horses. The black coats of the clergy are also a minor mark of status. There is less contact with the outside world; Dr. Thorne, for example, seldom visits London (*Framley*, II, 46), nor does Mr. Harding (*Warden*, p. 191). Family authority is more evenly divided than in the two upper classes.

Unlike women, men cannot leave Class III through marriage. In fact, a man who marries into a higher class may lose prestige, as Mr. Mortimer Gazebee learns too late: "marriage had not put him on a par with his wife's relations, or even with his wife" (*House*, I, 180). The distinction is succinctly described by Dr. Thorne: "A man raises a woman to his own standard, but a woman must take that of the man she marries" (*Thorne*, I, 125). As a means of vertical ascent, the church is comparatively flexible since one enters the clergy voluntarily and may rise or, occasionally, decline in it. Advancement in the church is immediately recognized

and is accorded deference.

Class III, like the other status groups, is not an integrated whole but a network of *inferior-superior positional ranks*. Dr. Fillgrave ranks higher within Class III than John Bold. Clergymen who hold livings look down on those who do not (*Chronicle*, II, 309). Members of the two superior strata draw a line in the lower reaches of Class III, dividing those who are considered gentry from those who are not. At the Proudies' reception cheaper wines are served curates and country vicars (*Towers*, I, 109), and at Ullathorne separate marquees are erected for the "quality" and for the "non-quality" (*Towers*, II, 107).

Material possessions do not automatically qualify a man as a gentleman. The Crawleys are inferior in food and dress to the artisans (*Framley*, I, 322-323), yet Mark Robarts must acknowledge that Mr. Crawley is considered a gentleman by all who know him (*Chronicle*, I, 275). An indefinable manner is the hallmark. Dr. Stanhope recognizes at first sight that Mr. Slope is not quite a gentleman (*Towers*, I, 110). The demeanor of gentility is not the result of education; Louis Scatcherd was sent to Eton and Cambridge, but "this receipt, generally as it is recognized, will not make a gentleman" (*Thorne*, I, 177).

Mark Robarts, a country clergyman in *Framley Parsonage*, would interest a social anthropologist. In most respects he belongs in Class III, but his companionship with Lord Lufton, his rapid advancement in the church, and his own aggressiveness induce him to aspire to some prerogatives of Class II. His case would be analyzed in terms of his anomalous position in the status system. Trollope shows him suffering humiliation and unhappiness until he rediscovers his equilibrium in his home and in his church. In the novel he is a human being, not a specimen. Without such painful consequences, Mr. Walker is also suspended between two classes; as an attorney, he is in Class III,

but his prestige and his prosperity enable him to give dinners to which "the county gentlemen not unfrequently condescended to come" (*Chronicle*, I, 1).

Class IV includes what Trollope calls the "mercantile class" and the well-to-do farmers like Greenacre, Subsoil, and Lookaloft, who own land or hold it on a long-term lease. Mrs. Lookaloft's transformation of Barlystubb farm into Rosebank (*Towers*, II, 168) and her invasion of the Ullathorne drawing room suggest ambition, but the general tendency is toward acceptance of status. This group is, in fact, more conservative than many persons of higher station; the shopkeepers are "a stiff-necked generation" who reject a demagogue like Sir Roger Scatcherd (*Thorne*, I, 286). There are few contacts outside the shire; travel, if undertaken, is purposive, as a young man may take a post in London or a tradesman may emigrate. The family is controlled by the wife; Farmer Lookaloft stays meekly at home when his wife attempts to mingle with the gentry (*Towers*, II, 124). A woman's red hands are a sign of subordinate status, as is a man's preference for beer rather than wine. Serious-mindedness is evident; "tradesmen with their wives and families" constitute most of Harold Smith's audience at his evening lecture, and they bring along their maps (*Framley*, I, 87, 89).

Trollope has least to say of the two subordinate classes. Several modern community studies, incidentally, have been criticised for inadequate treatment of the lower-lowers, or Lulus, as facetious social anthropologists sometimes call them. The apprentices, servants, brickmakers, turnip farmers, and other laborers in Class V have at least a theoretical chance of improving their positions. Acceptance of status is the quality demanded from them; and many, especially servants, have adopted an *etiquette of deference*, which satisfies *superordinate groups* without arousing their curiosity. Family authority, to judge by the brickmakers, is largely

masculine. The lives of Class V members are confined to the parish. Venturesome apprentices attempt to invade the festivities at Ullathorne, but few succeed (*Towers*, II, 118). Trollope obviously disapproves of the radicalism to which he feels some segments of this class are inclined. "Barchestrian roughs" heckle Mr. Moffat's election speech (*Thorne*, I, 292). Sir Roger Scatcherd, once a stone mason, was born in this class and retains radical propensities even after amassing a fortune and acquiring a title (*Thorne*, I, 27). Among members of this class, despite their democratic tendencies, royalty-worship is most pronounced (*Thorne*, I, 177-78).

The utterly indigent persons in Class VI are mostly worn-out workers from Class V who are supported by society. Their world is most circumscribed. The lives of the bedesmen are contained within Hiram's Hospital. Resentment smolders beneath the surface, and eleven of the twelve old men set their marks to a petition demanding their rights. They find the impossible promise of a hundred pounds a year irresistible. The rebels refer to Mr. Harding, their only friend, as "old Catgut" (*Warden*, p. 45).

### III

Social controls are the traditions, mores, and pressures which regulate the behavior of individuals and groups. The *hierarchy of status* with its various tokens of differential rank is, of course, a kind of social control.

Barset is freer than most modern communities from the intervention of outside agencies. The government exerts a control and the universities an influence over church appointments. The *Jupiter*, a London newspaper, penetrates the shire to some extent with its reflection of urban opinion.

As in most relatively isolated communities, gossip is a potent social control. *Gossip cells*, such as the dean's library or Mrs. Umbleby's parlor, circulate facts



and opinions. Rumor is spread by "unseen telegraphic wires which carry news about the county" (*Chronicle*, III, 1). Statements made in a private meeting are quoted verbatim a short time later (*Towers*, I, 73). The celerity of gossip, especially scandal and rumors of vacancies or appointments, is a feature of Barsetshire life that has a familiar ring to anyone who has lived in a small city centered around a single institution such as a university.

The potency of gossip is partly due to the fact that most people, especially in Class III, desire approbation and fear disapproval. Deviation from accepted modes of thought or action is speedily censured. Superiors sometimes exert control by hints; a new curate desists from intoning the service after Mrs. Grantley inquires whether he has a sore throat (*Towers*, II, 56). His friends of twenty years look coldly on Mr. Quiverful when he is suspected of sympathy with Mr. Slope (*Towers*, I, 302). Dr. Gruffen, who imprudently wears colored trousers to the home of the Earl De Guest, is never asked to dine there again (*House*, II, 22).

Various rituals emphasize and sustain the social controls. The widow's cap, which imperceptibly grows smaller and more frivolous, is a ritualistic symbol of the passing of the mourning period (*Towers*, I, 297-98; II, 219). What anthropologists call *rites of passage* (commemorations of a transition from one period of life to another) are well illustrated by Harry Gresham's coming-of-age party in *Doctor Thorne*. Various symbolic acts acknowledge subordination: for example, Mrs. Hearn rising when her landlord, Squire Dale, enters a room (*House*, I, 123) or a vergers in the cathedral touching his hat brim when Lady Dumbello's name is mentioned (*House*, I, 229-30). A ritual with the opposite significance is the custom of

Squire Gresham and his son, who go to the front of the church every Sunday to greet their neighbors "and get rid of some of the exclusiveness which was intended for them" (*Thorne*, II, 331). Drinking a glass of wine with a man is a symbolic act which implies intimacy but not necessarily equality. Mr. Harding regularly drinks a glass of port with Mr. Bunce to signalize the unique confidence that exists between them (*Warden*, p. 27). When Johnny Eames declines a glass of wine, the Earl De Guest likes him better for being in awe of his rank (*House*, I, 205).

#### IV

Considering Anthony Trollope as a social anthropologist is a disquieting experience. Systematic categories and cumbersome terminology contrast ludicrously with the warm lifelikeness of his characters. Recalling his disdain for jargon and his hatred of sham, one is at times uneasily conscious of the echo of booming laughter as he evaluates the *differential disprivilege* of Archdeacon Grantley. Still, it is evident that without recourse to questionnaires or any methodology except imaginative observation, Trollope included in his novels many aspects of society which are considered meaningful by a modern social scientist.

In defending novel-reading, as we occasionally must do even to our colleagues, we often fall back on the claim that fiction is valuable as a record of social history. If pressed, we cite instances of three kinds: the depiction of actual events and persons, the description of everyday life, and the evocation of the atmosphere of an era. The foregoing analysis of Barsetshire suggests another dimension for this definition. For those seeking the social history of a period, a novelist may also furnish the outlines of its class-structure and social organization.

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1956 is a year of elections. Register, inform yourself, and vote.

# Mrs. Thirkell's Barsetshire

CLARA F. MCINTYRE

WHEN Anthony Trollope created Barsetshire he gave England a county more individual and more interesting than most of those we can visit by train or bus. Angela Thirkell dared greatly when she decided to modernize this Barsetshire, but she has to a considerable extent succeeded. Naturally, many of the twentieth-century residents of the region can trace their ancestry to those of the nineteenth. The passage of time has made some changes in class distinctions, but the general divisions remain the same, and one may consider five of Mr. Coyle's six classes (set forth in the previous article, "Trollope as Social Anthropologist"): (I) Nobility, (II) County gentry and clerical dignitaries, (III) Professional men, (IV) Merchants and some farmers, and (V) Lower orders.

In the highest class—the nobility—the outstanding group is probably the Duke of Omnium's family. The Duke himself is an unassuming gentleman. His daughter is definitely informal: "Lady Cora, who had waited for the married ladies to precede her (though technically, as all educated people should know, a Duke's unmarried daughter precedes an Earl's, and all the more a Baron's wife)" (*The Duke's Daughter*, p. 105). The Pomfret family of The Towers is another important group, and here too we have an attitude of friendliness and interest in community affairs. Lord Lufton is a very young man overwhelmed by the responsibility which has come to him through the early death of his father. With all these families we have the impression of people who still own great estates without the wealth which should accompany them.

The second class is rather more inclusive than Trollope's; it might be considered a combination of his second and

third. There is not so much distinction between the high-ranking clergy and the lower orders; a vicar, especially if he chances to be a retired military man like Colonel Crofts, is received as cordially as a canon or a dean. Incidentally it may be said that the Church is not so important with Mrs. Thirkell; the School has to some degree taken its place. Southbridge, one of the extremely private schools which the English choose to call public, and the Priory School for younger boys occupy a prominent place in many of the books, and school-mastering is evidently a quite proper profession for gentlemen's sons.

Other professional men belong here. Mrs. Thirkell has considerable respect for architects: Mr. Middleton in *Before Lunch* and Mr. Barton in *Pomfret Towers* are decidedly prosperous and are received on more or less equal terms even by the nobility. Mr. Barton's son and daughter are invited to a week-end party at the Towers, and Daphne, Mr. Middleton's niece by marriage, though she has done some secretarial work for Lady Bond at half a crown an hour, becomes engaged to the heir to the estate with the hearty approval of both his father and his mother. Another example of the breaking-down of class barriers is the marriage of Lord Pomfret's heir to Sally Wicklow, sister of his assistant agent. Of course, even in Trollope's time a woman could rise to her husband's rank by marriage.

If there is any division in this second class, it would seem to be between those who are "county" and those who are not. Just what "county" means is a little hard to say. It seems to depend upon length of residence, and one's own lifetime is apparently hardly long enough. In *County Chronicle* we have the remark that "though Mrs. Brandon was a charming, a kind,

and still a very good-looking woman she was not Barsestshire; and her husband though of Barsestshire stock had been nobody in particular" (p. 132). And in *Private Enterprise*: "The Brandons were not quite county and Francis would probably do well to marry within his own sphere" (p. 91). This seems a bit inconsistent since Francis's sphere is the sphere of everybody else and Lady Cora has him act in the theatricals at Gatherum Castle.

Mr. Adams—in some ways Mrs. Thirkell's most interesting character—belongs here. He is definitely a self-made man who, beginning as a common workman, has achieved wealth and influence. In spite of crudeness he has a genius for making friends. He runs for Parliament as a Labor candidate and wins, though he afterward becomes almost as conservative as the opponent he has defeated. He finally marries the daughter of one of the old and respected families and is accepted by the gentry and to some extent by the nobility. The change in him is effectively described in *County Chronicle*: "... Mr. Adams's progress from what we can only call an outsider in a teddy-bear coat and bright yellow driving gauntlets and a violent check suit with cap to match to the not undistinguished-looking man he had become . . ." (p. 33). When he secures for best man at his wedding Mr. Gresham, Conservative Member for East Barsestshire, it is "the seal of the county's acceptance of the rich self-made ironmaster" (*County Chronicle*, p. 61). But Lucy Marling's mother, pleased though she is to know her daughter's future assured, still has her reservations. "Then she remembered that there is one thing one can always do for one's children. One can stand by them whatever happens: whether your son marries a duke's daughter with a hundred thousand pounds or forges a cheque, whether your daughter remains at home working for everyone or suddenly elects to marry right outside her class a man whom one has grown to like and re-

spect but never—let us be frank—considered as one of one's own kind" (*County Chronicle*, p. 5).

The fourth class is not emphasized much. Here we have the lesser tradespeople—grocers, meat men, keepers of small-town inns. They are brought in mostly to show the difficulty in obtaining food.

The last division (V) is the servant class, and with Mrs. Thirkell this is very important. The cooks and maids have a devotion to the family, and especially to the mistress, which leads to a jealous competition for favor. They have, according to Mrs. Thirkell, a complete submission to the social order, even a defensive attitude toward it. In one case, when the maid who opens the door is good-naturedly presented to the arriving guest by the son of the hostess, his mother is represented as feeling it a social error.

Even up to 1939 Francis would not, she was certain, have made a personal introduction between guest and parlormaid. Guest, if a stranger in the house, would have ignored parlormaid or at the most slightly inclined her head in recognition of her presence, and parlormaid would have taken deep offence if any more marked familiarity had been attempted. At any time during the war, while barriers were temporarily down, parlormaid if an old retainer might have tolerated a few words or a handshake from a guest, if an old friend of the family. Now the war was nominally over, all the really good parlormaids had reverted more or less to type . . . we may assume that the good cap-and-apron class still remains one of the staunchest supporters of the old order and will batten upon it and defend its rights till the last really well-trained servant is dead. (*Private Enterprise*, p. 188)

The most surprising thing to an American reading Mrs. Thirkell is the amount of help. We are used to mothers, even in prosperous families, who take care of their own children with the aid of an occasional baby-sitter; in Barsestshire there is often a nurse and a second nurse. And

the importance of the Nanny is amazing. Lettice, an attractive young mother in *Marling Hall*, says of her children, "I think they are very nice little girls, but if I hadn't got nurse I mightn't like them so much. Nurses really make mother-love possible." The Nanny, when she grows too old to work, often remains with the family, is deferred to as an authority, and looks upon her former charges, now married with children of their own, as *hers*. All this makes us wonder a little about the financial situation. We are given the impression that people have little money and that food is not only expensive but very difficult to get. Yet the presence of an extra dependent is accepted without question. "Noblesse oblige" seems to apply even to the humbler gentry.

Mrs. Thirkell apparently means to give the impression that the barriers between classes are weakening; that there is more sympathy and understanding, and more inclination to work together. "Lord Silverbridge . . . felt as a good many people did that if the Adamsons and the Marlings and the Omniums could join hands, England would be the safer" (*County Chronicle*, p. 270).

However, class feeling is still alive. This is shown especially when the Hosiers' Boys School is evacuated and temporarily combined with Southbridge. The combination of schools is most unhappy for both sides, and the sentiment of the one which has been compelled to act as host is expressed later: "there was a short silence while each member of the party reflected according to his or her light that East and West, day and night, salt and sugar were immutably different and so were the accidents or traditions, however one liked to put it, of birth and class; and that however earnestly well-intentioned gumphs might believe in mixing or levelling all ranks, it would never do" (*Peace Breaks Out*, p. 69).

Mrs. Thirkell's warmest sympathy seems to go to the highest class—the nobility. Again and again she comments

upon the uncertainty of their lot and their devotion to duty. The main part of Gatherum Castle has been taken over by the Ministry of General Interference, and "In the old servants' quarters . . . the present Duke and Duchess lived, made a home for their hard-working family whenever it could get a holiday, and worked ceaselessly themselves for the county and for the Conservative Party" (*County Chronicle*, p. 211). Describing a walk over the Pomfret estate, she says, "It was all pure English and pure heart-break, for no one, not the present Lord Pomfret nor Roddy Wicklow, his faithful agent, knew whether Lord Mellings, aged about six, would be able to keep up any of the estates he would inherit or provide for any of the old tenants to whom the Towers had for so long been a rock and a shelter, accompanied by a good deal of autocratic benevolence" (*Private Enterprise*, p. 319).

Eleanor Grantly has just made a visit at Pomfret Castle when she attends a party at the Deans'. Mr. Dean is connected in some way with engineering, is wealthy and has a family of attractive and prosperous children. Eleanor reflects upon the two very different ways of life: "on one side the old life struggling to keep alive and hold its standards high, the ceaseless work for others, the tremendous responsibilities of a position where once had been money and power and now there was so little to give except ceaseless, selfless work for the county, the estate, and the tenants, while the future of their very home was insecure. And here wealth without landed responsibilities and as far as could humanly be seen a family well grounded that was increasing and multiplying and thriving. Which was the better she could not say. Perhaps the one was doomed to be succeeded by the other in the whirligig of time" (*The Old Bank House*, p. 105).

One is inclined to wonder whether the unselfishness of the upper class is a little over-emphasized. But Mrs. Thirkell pre-

sents very effectively the changes that have come about and the petty annoyances which accompanied a war and an even more trying peace. And her dukes and duchesses are human enough to win our sympathy.

In politics Barsestshire is uniformly Conservative. Even Mr. Adams, who was put into Parliament by the Labour party, frequently votes with the other side. Mrs. Thirkell is gently satirical in her treatment of her ultra-conservatives, but it is evident that to a considerable extent she agrees with them. She sounds quite in earnest when she says, "the prison of the six years' war and one year of so-called peace in a country that had given itself into the hands of irresponsible doctrinaires was breaking down the resistance of the strongest and most sensible" (*Private Enterprise*, p. 366). In another place she comments, "When the school broke up, Charles went abroad with the fifty pounds allowed by a Government that had managed to spend millions with nothing par-

ticular to show for it except free hospitals and operations for the whole British Empire and all visiting foreigners and perpetually rising cost of living" (*County Chronicle*, p. 183). Anne Fielding remarks that her father is standing for Parliament, and "There was no need for her to add that her father was standing as a Conservative, for that was the only thing the people one knew did stand for" (*Peace Breaks Out*, p. 88).

We have to admit that Mrs. Thirkell's point of view is a little onesided. "They" would probably show a picture of a quite different world. But on the whole she gives pretty fairly the spirit of an England tired by a war and an unsatisfying peace, enduring discomfort but insisting upon the right to complain of it. We can be grateful to her for her humor, for her good-natured satire, for the many pleasant, attractive people to whom she has introduced us. She has not merely adopted Trollope's county; she has made one of her own.

### Elegy for a Pedant Noticeably Dead

SHELDON P. ZITNER

Here lies correctly, in a lower case,  
An outworn type with a thin Roman face.  
Committees smile, deans privately rejoice  
As all his action shifts to passive voice.  
Now dullard earthworms hyphenate his spine  
And, with all common nouns, his parts decline.  
Drudging maggots dot his careless eyes;  
Rot ends the ambiguity of *lies*.  
Cold is the fervor others might employ  
To raise a Rome or sing away a Troy:  
His indignations take on yellower hues  
In back pages of *derrière garde* reviews;  
His nice amendments to the cosmic scheme  
Fade in the margins of a freshman theme;  
His style uniforms in that most critical damp  
Which fosters the eternal writer's cramp.  
Where indexers with index cards are filed  
He sleeps in the arms of Kittredge and of Child,  
His alphabet mute as Chaucer's final -e,  
Possessed by earth, without apostrophe.



# Round Table

## CURRICULAR PROBLEMS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

RICHARD C. BOYS

For various reasons, many college English departments are currently re-evaluating their curricula. In part this means trying to determine the value of such approaches as the survey, the types course, and the course devoted to major figures. This critical scrutiny is going on in all fields, but a survey recently made throws light on the period 1660-1800 specifically. Forty colleges and universities, large and small, publicly supported and privately endowed, in all parts of the country, were sent questionnaires, the results of which are given here.

(1) "Does your institution offer any courses devoted *entirely* to this period?" All but a handful have something in this field, though there are some differences in the dates chosen as the half-year dividing point; some split at 1730, some at 1744; one begins at 1765 and goes through the Romantic period. There is a rather widespread agreement that graduates and undergraduates should not be in the same course, since this sometimes allows a spread of students from sophomores to advanced graduate students.

(2) "Do you offer any courses that are not surveys but are devoted to major figures?" While almost without exception the colleges have no such course, eleven of the twenty-eight universities do. In commenting on this kind of course, the spokesman for a large and important graduate school says: "Personally I believe in the semester course devoted to the work of one man. A whole term of Swift, or Johnson, or Dryden, or Pope can be very rewarding. Students learn more about a period from this detailed work than from any superficial talk about a century." One large group takes a middle course and builds a period course around a central figure.

(3) "What part does eighteenth-century literature play in so-called General Education courses?" Half of the universities questioned have no General Education courses, half do; few colleges offer such work. There was general agreement, how-

ever, that when the courses do exist they contain almost no eighteenth-century English literature; the exceptions use Boswell's *Johnson*, *Gulliver*, some Pope, and some Fielding.

(4) "As far as period courses are concerned, do you notice any trends?" About half of all the institutions report that the period course is losing out. Most of the comments show a shift from the period course to major figures and types.

(5) "Do you notice any marked change in student interest in eighteenth-century literature?" Here there is a sharp division, as many replies claiming an increase as a decrease. Several comment that while it is most difficult to get students interested in the period, once you are able to crack the shell of resistance it is amazing how they respond.

(6) "Do you think that period courses should be given up?" Here the opinion was almost unanimous in favor of keeping them. In fact, several people seemed indignant that the question was even asked and replied sharply. A few did suggest that period courses should be modified, and possibly be given only for students majoring in English. Eleven, when asked, thought that no greater emphasis should be placed on period courses than at present, and three thought that the number should be increased.

In the comments, feeling ran high particularly on the virtues and shortcomings of the historical approach to literature. One man wrote: "I don't suppose that an advocate of the historical approach is the one to comment on the desirability of continuing such an approach, as he might be prejudiced, but frankly admitting that I am biased, I am glad to say that I think we may be swinging back to history again, and that if so we here have saved ourselves the trouble of having to reform our program again by having waited the pendulum's return patiently." On the other hand, we have the following: "The period courses presently given might well be streamlined,

so that more time could be spent on literary rather than historical problems and oddities. In period courses usually too much time is spent on literary history, minor figures, and miscellaneous rot."

The questionnaire shows that roughly half of the institutions are concerned about the falling off of interest in eighteenth-century literature. Those who comment explain this partly by the pronounced shift of the students' interest to contemporary literature and the scorn they have for anything written before 1900. An overall impression gained from the questionnaire is that the champions of eighteenth-century literature might make their field more appealing in competitive terms if they showed

off the polished gems and left the rougher stones for more experienced students. Also, an obvious, but important, fact of life is that the interests of this literature are best served by an enthusiastic and effective teacher. As one person put it, "A good man can make even Stephen Duck seem great."

These problems, of course, are not confined to the literature of the Restoration and the eighteenth-century. As college English departments plunge into the battle of mass education, both in giving the students the best there is in literature, and in training graduate students to go out to teach all over the country, they must give careful thought to establishing a curriculum best suited to all needs.

### WILLIAM COLLINS'S "ODE ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER"

E. L. BROOKS

This fine poem, although restored in this century to a niche of higher regard than it has filled since the time of Hazlitt, still seems to me to suffer injustice at the hands of critics who misconstrue the lines or fail to see the design. Much of the misunderstanding occurs at the passage about the weaving of the Cestus of Poethood, lines 23-50.

Edmund Blunden, Collins's best editor, speaks of "Collins's vision of the Creator . . . wedding Fancy, and begetting the Poetical Character" (*Poems*, 1929, p. 168). Collins's poem, however, does not describe a wedding of God and Fancy, nor is the Poetical Character called the son of such a pair.

Let us look at the myth Collins creates. In the first twenty-two lines of the poem, he reviews Spenser's tale of the Cestus of Maidenhood or Purity, which only one woman was destined to wear. He conceives of a Cestus of Poethood or Poetical Character (hence the title of the poem), which only a few men are destined to wear. Lines 23-50 tell of the creation of that cestus or poetical character. Collins begins a creation myth which remains closely parallel to that in the Bible.

Readers should note that the passage begins by saying that the cestus was "wove," and that eighteen lines later some of the Passions are sitting near the *woof*, which

is "growing." This surely means that God made the character on a loom rather than that He begot it on a female. But let us look more closely at lines 23-40, for it is there that the union of God and Fancy is said to occur.

The lines tell how "the lov'd Enthusiast" (Fancy), on the day of creation (Collins sees only one, rather than six, days of genesis), begged God to make the Cestus. In the mood to comply with her request, God withdrew and "sate with her." He did not lie with her. While they sat, he wove the cest, for all creation was his own handiwork. Meanwhile the seraphs around the throne played and sang triumphant songs or hymns exalting Love and Mercy. As the fabric grew, Fancy looked on and sang ("breath'd her magic Notes aloud"). That was *all* she did. She did not conceive, gestate, and give birth to a child (or a belt) all in the same day, singing as she did so, and assisted in song by angelic choruses.

When the Belt of Poethood was finished, God gave it to Fancy to dispose of as she liked. She is accordingly the bestower of the gift in lines 18-20, and in the last stanza of the poem she has given the belt to Milton.

Some critics who understand that the cestus itself was not born of "the union of Fancy and the Father of all things," believe, with H. W. Garrod (*Collins*, 1928, p. 69), that the "rich-hair'd Youth of Morn," (line

39) resulted from this league. But I find it rather strange that God, who *thought* (see line 25) sky, earth, and sea into existence, should find it necessary, in the prelapsarian state, to beget anything whatsoever on a female. And I doubt that Collins, not an irreverent poet, even when fusing myths, would easily have ignored the doctrine that Christ was "the only begotten of God." Yet in Garrod's interpretation, God not only begets the Youth but all things that are subject to the Youth: "And all thy subject Life was born!" (line 40).

Who, then, is the rich-haired youth born on this creating and girdle-weaving day? Garrod says, "Clearly he is the Poet, who has the rich, or long, hair of all poets, and of Apollo, father of poets." He is not a mortal poet, however, or Collins would certainly have had Fancy bestow the cestus on him, he having apparently been made for the purpose. And he is not an Ideal or Abstract poet, for then he would hardly differ from the Poetical Character—that is, the woven belt. He can then hardly be a poet at all.

The rich-haired youth is, by his attributes, the sun. The sun's "subject Life" is everything animal or vegetable, and according to the creation story which Collins is duplicating rather closely, the sun and the animal and vegetable kingdoms were created at the same time.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Collins uses the word *born* because it seems most appropriate for the inception of his personification, Youth, and of things which reproduce themselves. When the identification of Youth and sun is made, Collins, who humbly aspired to "blest, prophetic loins," is relieved of charges of irreverence and audacity. God, a spirit, is not represented as procreating in animal fashion.

It should be said of this passage that the appearance of a colon after line 38 in some editions encourages the God-weds-Fancy concept. Cook's edition (1796) has a comma for the colon. I have been unable to see Langhorne's edition, but Langhorne identified the Youth with the sun and was therefore not misled by the colon even if he retained it. Blunden repeats the colon of the

<sup>1</sup> According to Genesis, vegetable life was created on the third day, the sun on the fourth, animal life on the fifth; but Collins, as observed, telescopes all creation into one day.

1746 edition. The comma is obviously preferable.

The end of "*Ode on the Poetical Character*" has also been unhappily criticized. Garrod says that the poem "ends disappointingly," and that "it affords yet another illustration of Collins' imperfect control of his own connexions." This dispraise, I think, results from not noticing that the parallel with the story of Genesis, conspicuous in the epode, is maintained throughout the rest of the poem. Can the action (for I do not find that the *poetic quality* deteriorates) be literally disappointing if one is able, from the middle of the poem, to forecast its end? In the closing stanza, Milton sits in a poetic paradise like that he fashioned in verse for Man; but as Man was, after Adam, excluded from the terrestrial paradise, so the poets were, after Milton, excluded from his Paradise of Poesy. Could this not have been predicted? Again, Garrod finds the fact that Heaven and Fancy are the powers which exile the poet from Paradise "ill conceived and disconcerting." But the maker of Eden excluded his creature Man from it. If Collins represents the poet as being ejected from his poetical paradise by the powers that gave it to him, is he not most consistently keeping his myths parallel?<sup>2</sup> And why should this ejection from Elysium be "disconcerting"? A close reading of the last lines of the poem will show that it is only Milton's "ancient trump" that is silent, only *his* bliss that is forever ended, only *his* divine song that is still. Collins would have liked to be another Milton. But we do not really mind much that he failed—he is something else we like. One *Paradise Lost* will suffice. Perhaps we need other poets as great as Milton, but we do not need another Milton. And Collins does not say that Fancy will not award the cestus of poetical character again. Note the present tense of line 20: "To few [Fancy] the godlike gift assigns." Fancy makes the award infrequently, to be sure; but as long as there are a few recipients, we shall be as well off as our ancestors.

<sup>2</sup> To blame Pope and Taste for the loss of our poetic Eden, as Garrod implies Collins should have done, would, indeed, have added the devil to the cast of the drama; but it was not Satan who closed Paradise.

## A CLASS IN DEFINITION

DAVID P. FRENCH

Starting a freshman English class in the fall is sometimes one of the hardest problems in the whole year's work. If the instructor begins with mechanics, the students are bored from the start; even questions of structure may sound to the cynic suspiciously like what he has been hearing for the past twelve years. In an attempt to shock classes into something approaching alertness, I have gradually decided to hit them hard the first day with a good stiff tussle in basic problems of definition. The method seems to work: they are sometimes bluffed temporarily into thinking that English no longer involves rules of grammar, they often hear a quite new approach to the nature of language, and they actually seem to enjoy the class hour—a not unimportant consideration. Discussion might go something like this:<sup>1</sup>

*Instructor:* In a drugstore the other day, I heard three students arguing about milk shakes. One of them said he had been gypped: his had come without ice cream. The second said, "No, you got just what you asked for—if you wanted ice cream, you should have asked for a frosted. Milk shakes just have milk and flavor." The third one began to grin: "Now who's mixed up? That's called a frappe, not a frosted." At this point, being college students, they began a long philosophical argument about the "real essence of milk shake." Let's play the same game. You there in the blue shirt—what is a milk shake? *Blue shirt* (dubiously): Well, I think the first was right. You see, maybe the second meant a float or a malt, because they—*Lumberjack shirt* (interrupting positively): No, malts always

have malt in them, so the third's the right one. When I was working down at Smith's soda fountain. . . .

After about four exchanges of this sort, the discussion begins to peter out; then some bright student in the back row suddenly begins to grin as light breaks in.

*Corduroy jacket:* I think they were all right: it all depends who's talking! In Massachusetts, for some reason, they like to call it a frappe when it has ice cream in it, but we always thought that was a frosted. *Instructor:* Fine! Now you're getting somewhere. In other words, how good is the question they were arguing? *Corduroy jacket:* Well, I guess it's ok, but—no, actually it's not very good at all. They should have said, "What is a drink with those things in it called *here*?" *Instructor:* Good, but now tell me, what have you been saying about the nature of language? Okay, you in the necktie. *Necktie* (after a pause): Is the point maybe that you've got to say what group you're talking about when you try to give a definition? Is it maybe wrong to worry about what definition is right and what words really mean? (Grin) What is "right"? *Blue shirt:* Well if you say that, then what good's a dictionary? They keep tellin' you to go out and buy one, and now you say it couldn't help you. *Instructor:* A good question, but let's shelve it for now—we'll come back to it before the end of the week. For the minute, let's try another problem. Who'd be willing to take a shot at defining the word *desk* for me? How about you in the toreador pants there? *Toreador pants* (unhappily): Well, I guess it's something you write on. *Instructor:* Fine. Then the kitchen table is a desk if you do homework on it? *Toreador pants* (more unhappily): Well, I guess not—at least I wouldn't think so. I ought to say that it has drawers to keep stuff in like paper. *Corduroy jacket:* How about the desks we had in grade school? They didn't have any drawers in them, did they? I don't think you can tell anything from the way it's

<sup>1</sup> Much of the impetus and direction for this dialogue stems directly from my teaching in the General Education Ahf program at Harvard under Harold Martin, to whom I owe thanks for extended help. My examples of precise definitions for "hot" and "urban" come from Monroe Beardsley, *Thinking Straight* (1950), pp. 48-49. Other examples I owe to Joseph Raben, of Queens College, and to Henry Sostman.

used; it depends on what the guy who made it intended. If you really want to find out, just write to the manufacturer. *Toreador pants* (revengefully): So you wouldn't know a desk when you saw it unless you had a letter from the manufacturer saying so! And you thought I was mixed up! *Instructor* (to avoid bloodshed): Well, you both agree on one thing: you can't seem to find any one definition which will include all desks and exclude anything else. Can anyone else? No? Then either we are being stupid or—what's the other possibility? *Butch haircut*: You mean there isn't any? *Instructor*: Could be; in other words, you are suggesting that *desk* is a vague word, not a precise one. Let's take another case: the word *hot*. How hot is hot? When you girls read an oven regulator, what does *hot* mean? *Toreador pants*: It's 450°, isn't it? *Instructor*: Then 449° isn't hot? Would you like to sit in that temperature? *Toreador pants*: No, but that's different. When they say hot in an oven, they want to make it clear so you won't try to broil chops when you can barely cook a cake. It's a special kind of hot. *Instructor*: In other words, it's an arbitrary figure? If so, it is obviously more useful than a vague, imprecise term in many ways. How many others like it can you find? For example, you people in physics, what does *work* mean to you? *Hornrims*: Sir, work equals force times distance. *Instructor*: Right enough, but what does that mean? For instance, if I lift a brick from this desk and put it on the windowsill, then I do a certain unit of work. Likewise, if I do the same thing forty times, the forty-first time takes the same amount of work, doesn't it? But would it seem so to you? What do you think there? *Chinos*: It sure wouldn't seem it—but you're using the word another way. *Instructor*: Well, we've already agreed that exact, precise definitions are useful because they prevent confusion. Now, how many words we use are precise? Is *desk*? *cat*? *hill*? When does a hill become a mountain, for instance? Or when does a town become a city? I think, actually, that the census people have a specific definition, something like 2500 people. Should we invent operational definitions, definitions which are exact and verifiable, for every-

thing in the language? *Hornrims*: Sir, being a physics major, I like operational definitions. But I don't think that we should have them as our only words. If we did, then we would need thousands more words than we have now. *Instructor*: I agree. In fact, why and when do we need them? For instance, I have heard that there is no one word in the Eskimo language for *snow*; instead, there are separate terms for "wet snow," "dry snow," "snow suitable for house-building," and so on. Why? *Hornrims*: Well, certainly their training is less abstract and theoretical than ours. . . . *Corduroy jacket*: Uh-uh, just the other way around: they've got special words because they know more about snow than we do. I don't think we make up words until we need 'em pretty bad, maybe in a factory or lab. We don't need a lot of ways to say *snow*! *Instructor*: Exactly—and look at one other thing. As the man in that corner said, we'd need more words; in other terms, we would lose flexibility. For instance, both a jackknife and a motor-driven circular saw can do the same job—they cut wood. Which is the better tool? *Blue shirt*: The circular saw—it's a lot more exact, and you don't make crooked cuts. *Instructor*: But what if you were going to be left on a desert island? Which would you take? And—more important—why? *Blue shirt*: Well, the circular saw—no, I guess really I'd take the jackknife. Maybe it doesn't do one job so well, but you could do a heck of a lot more things with it. *Instructor*: Don't stop—what's the moral? *Blue shirt*: Just what we said before, I guess: vague words are useful. *Instructor*: So far, then, we seem to agree on several ideas: definitions depend on context; some words are very precise and have their uses; others are quite vague—but have their uses too. We're getting quite a bit of linguistic theory here—let's try a bit more. A while ago I heard a sermon to the effect that drinking is not manly. A bit later, I read a story where someone said "That chap's not even man enough to take a drink." Who was right? *Toreador pants*: I'm getting suspicious of those questions you're pulling. It depends on where you are, doesn't it, like with the milk shake? *Instructor*: Partly, yes, you're quite right; but can you go even



further? Is the problem here merely one of geographical location? *Lumberjack shirt*: Isn't it maybe even more a question of how you were brought up? I mean, if your folks are pretty strict, they'll tell you it isn't manly, but if they're modern they won't. *Instructor*: Tell me, you with the butch, what do you think of that question? Where does this man stand himself on the problem? *Butch haircut* (with a grin): I guess he sounds thirsty. *Instructor*: How do you know? Did he say so? *Butch haircut*: No, he didn't exactly say so—well, I guess he did. *Blue shirt*: Sure he did, by implication. *Instructor*: An impressive word—meaning what? *Blue shirt*: Well, he said "modern," and he wouldn't have said that if he didn't like it. He wouldn't have said it the same way. *Instructor*: Is it perhaps the same problem we have with "manly"? What do the two cases have in common? *Hornrims*: Do you mean, sir, that a word may mean different things to people with different views of life? What a man finds manly would depend on his religious views, so a minister would have different ideas from those in your sophisticated novel.

*Instructor*: It wasn't all that sophisticated, but you're on the track. In other words, sometimes to understand a man's language you must understand something of his whole philosophy. It's a complicated order, but. . .

From here on, an instructor might reinforce his points by reading passages using the same word in several ways, or perhaps spend whatever time remains—and little usually does—on a quick demonstration of the traditional Aristotelian definition with its *genus* and *differentiae*. By the end of the period, the class is usually highly confused, but in time the confusion is likely to produce both thought and good writing. It is perhaps worth noting that the instructor needs only to ask questions, not to give answers. A mimeographed example of extended definition the next hour will give an intelligent student all the training he needs to wrestle with defining a highly abstract word for his own first theme assignment. On the whole, this kind of course introduction has produced excellent results—and student papers show the effects all term.

### NCTE SUMMER WORKSHOPS

The National Council of Teachers of English will co-sponsor six workshops in the summer of 1956. The information below may be supplemented by writing to the place or person designated. Fees for each workshop are determined by the college that serves as co-sponsor.

1. PACIFIC COAST ENGLISH CONFERENCE (9-13 July)  
*Theme*: The Teaching of Composition, Grammar, and Usage  
*Further Information*: Department of English, Stanford Univ., Stanford, Calif.
2. UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS (9 July to 3 August)  
*Theme*: Planning the Content of the Secondary English Course  
*Further Information*: Department of English, University of Illinois
3. UNIVERSITY OF IOWA (18-29 June)  
*Topics*: Secondary School Reading, Writing, Literature, Journalism, Testing  
*Further Information*: Professor Harry H. Crosby, S. U. Iowa, Iowa City
4. UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CITY (11 June to 6 July)  
*Theme*: Current Trends and Issues in the Teaching of Secondary School English  
*Further Information*: Hugh W. Speer, Dean of Education, U. Kansas, Kansas City, Mo.
5. HUNTER COLLEGE (9-27 July)  
*Theme*: Common Learnings in the Social Studies and English  
*Further Information*: Marjorie B. Smiley, Hunter Coll., 695 Park Ave., N.Y. 21
6. BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA (6-18 August)  
*Theme*: Improving Elementary and Secondary Language Arts Teaching  
*Further Information*: Dean Chappell Wilson, Appalachian S.T.C., Boone, N.C.

# Councilletter

FROM THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

HELEN K. MACKINTOSH

This year as the magazines that represent the NCTE go to press for the April issues, the relatively new First Vice-President is in a quandary. Council policy requires that the letter which you are now reading be prepared and sent on its way to the respective editors to reach them by 1 February. Since the mid-winter meeting of the Executive Committee will not be held until 24-26 February in Chicago, no report of 1956 activities can be forecast. In Chicago, the members of the committee will take a look in retrospect at the decisions made in New York and at the progress of the jobs that were assigned or voluntarily assumed. Then they will be ready to take the next steps ahead.

With an organization such as ours, which has experienced rapid growth in the past several years, it is necessary to look critically at where we now stand. With approximately 32,000 members and subscribers, the problems of communication, even for a group devoted to the art of communication, become more difficult. It would seem relatively simple to be able to hear or read enough about the workings of the Council to become intimately acquainted with it. But one has only to take a look at the nature and extent of Council organization and activities to realize how complex they are.

The *Executive Committee* consists of the duly elected officers, two immediate past presidents, the chairmen of the several sections, and the Executive Secretary. The *Board of Directors* includes local, state, regional, and across-the-board representation, as well as the Executive Committee and committee chairmen as ex officio members. *Working Committees* of the Council now number thirty-two, ranging from one concerned with the recruitment of teachers to one on relations with publishers of paper-bound books. These committees involve a wide sampling of the membership. The four magazines, *Elementary English*, *The English Journal*, *College English*, and *College Composition and Communication*, represent

both outlets for the membership and sources of stimulation for their readers. Supplementing and complementing these publications are books, bulletins, pamphlets, recordings, and various projected forms.

The scope of Council interests is represented by the following activities. *The Commission on the English Curriculum* is a strong arm of the Council which through its publications has developed a point of view that serves as a frame of reference for local, state, and national groups working in the language arts curriculum field. The Council *cooperates with twelve or more organizations*, including such groups as the MLA and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In 1954 the *summer workshop* idea was initiated, with the result that such workshops represent a continuing enterprise. In 1956, for the first time, three *European tours* are being sponsored by the Council.

It is now nearly impossible to find a room large enough to permit all those Council members attending the annual meeting to assemble and sit down together. It is as great a problem to find a hotel with adequate facilities for the great variety of offerings in the Friday sessions designed to meet the needs of the membership. If the Council is to attempt to serve a potential group of 200,000 English teachers, there must be continuous evaluation of activities and methods of work. The synchronization of the many resources of the Council is a major problem.

The function of the First Vice-President of the Council is now defined as one of thinking rather than working! As First Vice-President in 1955, Mrs. Luella Cook developed and presented to the Executive Committee and the editors of the Council magazines in New York an analysis of the needs of the teaching profession, both long-range and immediate, and both for English teachers and for others. This challenging look at the broad responsibility of the Council is one that will be carried along into 1956 and the years ahead.

## COLLEGE SECTION MEETING AT THE CHICAGO MLA

## I. SYMPOSIUM ON ETV

Under the chairmanship of Warner G. Rice (Michigan), a panel made up of John Ashton (Indiana), William Gibson (N.Y.U.), and Edward Rosenheim, Jr. (Chicago) discussed the virtues and dangers of Educational Television.

Dr. Ashton, Vice-President and Professor of English at Indiana, has kindly summarized his remarks as follows:

At Indiana University our major concern in educational television has been the development of programs for adult education. Certain problems have been encountered in developing such programs.

First, there is the problem of time, both of broadcasting time and of preparation time. What I call the "fifteen minute complex," the feeling on the part of many professional radio and television people that no audience will keep its attention fixed for more than fifteen minutes, is one which needs to be combated. If there is to be real substance in an educational broadcast dealing with an area in which the subject matter is of significance, there must be allowed sufficient time to develop adequately a sustained impression or effective point of view. This may vary from subject to subject, but it has been our experience that a half hour is a minimum for the adequate presentation of a topic on a sound educational basis. We have also, on occasion, presented hour and a half shows consisting of the shortened performance of an opera or of a play; most recently a performance of *Othello*, which was very effectively done. An equally crucial problem of time is involved in the preparation by the broadcaster of his materials and the rehearsal time necessary before going on the air. A single program is not so difficult, but an extended series of programs offers a real problem in terms of the faculty member's load.

The second problem is that of the character and level of the audience. It is our conviction at Indiana University that educational broadcasting should be aimed at what may roughly be called the average literate audience with some initial interest in various areas of knowledge, but without necessarily any special training in these areas. This means that the broadcasts should be pitched above the merely elementary level, but should not assume a scholarly or specialist's interest in the subject. We believe strongly that if the programs are truly educational, they are designed to be not merely entertaining but should have real substance and vigor in them. They

should stimulate the viewer to do some reading and thinking on his own.

Mr. Rosenheim, who is Executive Secretary of the Radio Office at Chicago and in charge of the Humanities program of WTTW, has generously outlined his statement:

Perhaps because he feels somewhat uneasy in his hybrid role, the "educational broadcaster" tends to stress the noun in his title at the expense of the adjective. One often detects in his thought the assumption that all broadcasting which is not "entertainment" is "education." This assumption has had certain rather disturbing consequences. It has led educators to invade areas in which—if we define "teaching" with any rigor whatever—they have very little business to be, to compete, rather unsuccessfully, with their commercial brethren in the fields of reportorial, documentary, religious, and even political broadcasting. It has, moreover, led them to neglect the problems and the possibilities of the one field for which they are uniquely qualified, namely teaching, in a more or less formal sense. There is nothing so alien and formidable about television as to make it an unsuitable medium for many of the same methods and materials which are employed in the classroom, although television does a singularly cruel job of underscoring defects in pedagogy. But the teacher of literature does face particular difficulties, primarily because he cannot assume his viewers' previous familiarity with literary works he chooses to discuss. This should lead the teacher of literature initially to confine his discussion to works which can actually be presented on the air. Beyond this, it should lead him to encounter, in advance of his colleagues in other disciplines, the basic challenge of educational broadcasting—the possibility for extension work which, while it exploits the television medium to the utmost, also elicits from the viewer-student, active participation in learning through independent study and group discussion.

Professor Gibson has suggested that since the N.Y.U. experiment in teaching composition by ETV is still so experimental, a report had better come at the conclusion—presumably sometime in 1957.

## II. CONFERENCE ON NON-MAJOR STUDENTS

With Professors Rice and Edward Foster (Georgia Tech) as leaders, and about fifty

department chairmen and members as followers, the following tentative points emerged from the discussion: (1) Very few institutions have a specific philosophy underlying their instruction. (2) There is some strong sentiment for merging composition and literature in a single program. (3) Composition teachers are poorly prepared and trained for their work. (4) Most colleges do not reward their composition teachers appropriately. (5) The question of whether

or not to teach "sub-freshman," remedial English is not yet resolved. (6) Teachers of sophomore, "non-major" literature are not properly prepared by traditional graduate-school work to approach the student effectively. (7) Professor Foster and his Committee should continue their work along these lines, and a similar session should be held at the time of the next MLA meeting. (Summarized from the report of Professor Elizabeth Schneider, Temple, Secretary)

## MORE NEWS OF THE 1955 CONVENTION

### I. SESSION 21: LITERARY RESEARCH AND THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

*Chairman:* Lewis Leary (Columbia). *Speakers:* Gerald E. Bentley, (Princeton), "Recent Shakespeare Scholarship"; Fred B. Millett (Wesleyan), "Some Studies in Contemporary Literature"; Lennox Grey (Teachers College, Columbia), "Studies of the Literary Audience." *Recorder:* Alfred H. Grommon (Stanford).

*Discussion:* Because so many people attended this meeting, some had to be seated in an adjacent room, and each speaker had to give his talk twice.

Professor Bentley said that much attention has been given to changes in language and to the pronunciation of English in Shakespeare's day. According to Bentley, the first definitive work on Shakespeare's pronunciation is Helge Kökeritz's *Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (1953), which indicates that, among much else, Shakespeare's speech was different from ours but not impossible to understand, and that Shakespeare's use of the pun was much more extensive than scholars have long assumed. Alfred Harbage's *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* indicates recent interest in the fact that Shakespeare actually wrote for two kinds of theaters and audiences: the public, which was attended by all classes but largely by the middle class; and the private, which was attended by only the well-to-do. A third study is F. E. Halliday's *A Shakespeare Companion*, a dictionary encyclopedia of place names, terms, theaters, casts, managers, etc. The best study on Shakespeare's imagery, said Bentley, is Wolfgang Clemens's, which was published in Germany in 1936 but not translated till 1953. Clemens treats the images from the point of view

that a good theatrical image must blend with what the spectator sees while watching the play. Professor Bentley concluded by discussing the excellence of the performances at the Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, as demonstration of the findings of recent research on many aspects of the plays.

In his opening remarks, Professor Millett stressed the teacher's problem of finding time to read the literature and also the studies of literature. He recommended that teachers use the review of American books that appears in the annual supplement to the *Americana Encyclopedia*. During the later discussion, Lewis Leary (Columbia) added such sources of information about recent scholarship as the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* (Virginia), *The Annotator* (Purdue), *Ezra Pound Newsletter* (California), *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Survey*, and *Shakespeare Newsletter*.

### II. COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

With Strang Lawson (Colgate) as chairman, this newly-formed NCTE unit met for the first time. Luella Cook (President of NCTE) presented a report of the UNESCO Conference (see the March *CE*), Nick Aaron Ford (Morgan State) reported on the UN Institute proceedings, and Professor Lawson discussed the agenda of the Committee, which includes the following: (1) Finding effective ways of exchanging ideas with other countries on teaching English. (2) Cooperating in exchanging and placing English teachers. (3) Representing the NCTE in UNESCO and the UN Institute. (Summarized from report of Mary E. Fowler, New Britain, Conn., S.T.C., Secretary)

### III. OUR PROFESSIONAL POTENTIAL: CORRECTION

To the Editor

Sir:

In the Councilletter on p. 314 of the Feb. 1956, issue of *CE*, in Prof. Edward Stone's report of an NCTE panel on Our Professional Potential, there are some statements which seem to me to need clarification and correction. First, I excerpted from my findings thirteen hectographed sheets relevant to attitudes of Indiana college English teachers as I was able to distinguish them. This is not more than a tenth of my findings and the non-factual aspect at that. So I must ask that you make it clear that what was "circulated and elucidated" in my participa-

tion in that panel is far from "the findings" of my study. Further, Prof. Stone states that the indifference of Indiana college English teachers led him to "take a dim view of the wisdom of relying on the rank and file in arriving at standards for our profession." My conclusions from my data are almost diametrically opposed to those of Prof. Stone. I am certain that the only meaningful "standards of our profession" will be those which are in the minds and hearts of teachers in the classrooms. Only when we have made a full and national study of the attitudes of our teachers toward their function will we have a realistic basis for setting up standards or improving them.

WILLIAM A. SUTTON

BALL S.T.C.

### Professorial

ANTHONY OSTROFF

They have come to me to learn,  
I to them to teach,  
As if together we could turn  
Our parallels and close  
The usual breach with neither breaking;  
Effect this by some mutual undertaking.

This, a calculated pose  
On both our parts, is pure  
In desire—though counter those  
Treacheries of line,  
The cynosure of our increased defection:  
Increasing distance follows intersection.

This fact assures a magic sign  
To square our need for love  
And, thus preparing, make design  
Upon our freedom. So plain,  
Geometry must guide our true relation;  
Ordered lines become a conformation.

Only order will contain  
Our need. O though the task  
Is not containment, pain  
Is spared if, thus, our lines pursue,  
Whatever mask desire construe,  
Directions geometrically true.



## Letters to the Editor

Sir:

*College English* comes near to reaching a new high in significant and thoughtful analysis in "The Greater Struggle Necessary," by John Gerber, in the February issue. Here Mr. Gerber has neatly surveyed what must be the independent and distressing observations of thousands of fellow teachers in the field. With notable perception and skill Mr. Gerber has pointed up effectively the components of the current tidal wave of anti-intellectualism that finds a very special focal point in the efforts and achievements of the "English Professor."

ROY M. SWANBERG

THORNTON JUNIOR COLLEGE

Sir:

The good reply by Robert Berkelman in the January issue to William D. Baker's earlier [Oct. 1955] observations on theme correction can be seconded with another practice that enables students to improve their writing through their own efforts. Since Prof. Baker cited only one student manual, some of his discouragement may arise from that manual's reliance on a system of correction symbols each of which usually covers several usages, like the comma, and therefore can easily leave the student ignorant of the particular error that needs correction. In fact, Prof. Baker himself suggests these symbols are meaningless to students.

Several other handbooks number their chapters and all subdivisions in such sequence that the instructor can, by using these reference numbers in place of a generalized symbol, pinpoint the particular usage that the student should know to make the needed correction. Although these handbooks carry a summary chart on the flyleaf, I have found it more helpful to prepare my own chart detailing the secondary and tertiary subdivisions not contained on the flyleaf. The number gives the student his exact reference, without floundering through symbol, chart, or index; he can thus put his finger on the specific point he needs, can analyze his own sentence, and has some surety of recognizing his error. Of course, some students consult

only the flyleaf, in which case they may guess wrong and revise incorrectly, but Prof. Berkelman's method of "persuasion," through deductions from the grade for careless corrections, will bring most of this group into line. (Publishers could provide a partial remedy by omitting the summarized chart from the flyleaf and instead furnishing instructors with detailed charts.) . . .

This system of correction is another device for getting students to work out problems for themselves. It has the advantage of enabling the instructor to provide cross references when a structural error involves more than one principle—for example, those comma splices resulting from the students' inability to relate several ideas within a sentence. It eliminates marginal notes that merely duplicate instructions printed in the handbook. It makes the handbook a useful tool, a ready reference, one students can continue to use after they leave the course. Best of all, the system cuts down the number of students' questions on mere mechanics and leaves more conference and class time for the larger elements of composition.

JEROME W. KLOUCEK

MONTGOMERY JUNIOR COLLEGE

Sir:

In my recording and transcription of the first four lines of Chaucer's *Prologue* I use the following pronunciations: *whan* [hwan], *Aprille* ['a:pril], *shoures* ['ʃu:rəz], *soote* ['so:tə], *droghte* [dru:xt], *perced* ['pe:rsəd], *to* [to], *roote* ['ro:tə], *bathed* ['bæðəd], *veyne* [væin], *swich* [switʃ], *licour* [li'ku:r], *vertu* [ver'tü:], *flour* [flu:r]; they make up almost 50 percent of the words in these four lines (and nearly all the significant ones), and the percentage of striking deviations from modern usage will be found to be approximately the same in all the extracts read by me. To my knowledge, none of these forms, with the exception of *whan*, *to*, *veyne*, have been heard in Britain for the last four or five centuries. It is startling, therefore, to find my reading characterized by your anonymous reviewer (Dec. 1955, p. 193), as "something like the stage Irishman of the nineteenth century"

Every reader of your journal, including myself, would doubtless appreciate having the precise phonological evidence on which your reviewer based this statement. Or did he by any chance confuse my Chaucer recording of 1955 with my Shakespeare reconstruction issued in 1953? To many listeners this sounded quite Irish.

I have not had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Robinson read Chaucer, though sixteen years ago I sat at his feet trying to learn some Breton. But I know that my reconstruction of Chaucer's pronunciation fully agrees with his own as set forth on pp. xxvi-xxviii of his Chaucer edition (1933), with the following three exceptions: I use the

"Harvard" [a:], not our present *a* in *father*, in *Aprille*, *name*, *take*, etc., the French [y:], transcribed [ü:], in *vertu*, *duke*, etc., not [iu], which was, however, current colloquially at the same time, and the voiced *th* in *that*, *the*, etc., which Robinson himself admits as a distinct possibility. If consequently my rendition sounds Irish, so would Robinson's have done. For I refuse to accept my alleged lack of "moving diapaason" as a valid criterion of nineteenth-century stage Irish.

Yours truly,

HELGE KÖKERITZ

YALE UNIVERSITY

### On Lost Libraries

JOHN F. ADAMS

When Alexander fell, the scholar's pride  
With learned smoke besmirched the countryside.  
Unknown, the Dead Sea Scrolls in rosin caked  
Through ages in a cave to nothing slaked.  
Once skins were bleached and cleared of ancient runes  
That tedious verse by fallen Rome's buffoons  
Could be transcribed by monks. The raiding Norse  
Used *Beowulf* to start a fire. Or worse.

Graduates surmise from scattered pieces  
Lost nouns' genders for their masters' theses.  
Scholars publish texts, recondite terrors  
Of lacuna, dialect, and scribal errors.  
Only a few charred bits survive time's touch,  
But that's enough. And more would be too much.

# Current English Forum

CONDUCTED BY THE NCTE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE  
MARGARET M. BRYANT, *Chairman*

Q. What is the status of "*Don't get but one*"? Should *only* be used instead of *not . . . but*?

A. Despite Mencken and some handbook writers who speak of double negatives, *not . . . but* in sentences like "*Don't get but one*" and "*I don't want but one*" is used by educated Americans in informal speech. (Formal English generally uses *only*: "Get *only one*"; "I want *only one*.") *Not . . . but* has been in the language since the OE period and is the logical construction, since *but* here means "except." *Not . . . but*, according to the *OED*, has never disappeared, but it has decreased greatly. No one today would say "I *didn't* hear *but* the wind" or "The sheep *isn't but* an animal," as would have been possible in OE. In ModE an indefinite pronoun has been added, as "I *didn't* hear *anything but* (I heard *nothing but*) the wind" or the *not* has been eliminated: "The sheep *is but* an animal." Where *not . . . but* has been kept is with the numeral. No one would say "He *didn't* want *anything but* two." Instead one would hear "He *didn't* want *but* two." "There *weren't but* two dentists in the town" does not sound unnatural; nor does "She *isn't but* six years old." One may also say "I *didn't* bring *but* two," but not "I *didn't* bring *but* this"; or "I *didn't* hear *but* four or five songs on the air," but not "I *didn't* hear *but* Bing Crosby."

Another pattern in which *not . . . but* is possible is: "He *cannot choose but* run"; "He *cannot but* be pleased"; "He *cannot but* doubt." This construction is not from OE usage, but grew up after the late Renaissance, according to the *OED*, based on Lat. *non possum non*. (M.M.B.)

Q. The phrase *can't seem* is frequently employed. Is it not illogical?

A. Many handbooks have warned against the use of the illogical *can't seem* in sentences like "I *can't seem* to open the door," because *can't* is not followed by an infinitive. One would have to say "I seem not to be able to open," or "I seem unable to open,"

or "I do not seem able to open," all of which are somewhat awkward. As a result, the simple, useful *can't seem* has grown up, employed frequently in informal English in America. The *WNID* considers it acceptable. Texts like the *Macmillan Handbook* by Kierzek, *Scribner Handbook* by Marckwardt and Cassidy, and Perrin's *Writer's Guide* recognize it as an informal and colloquial idiom. Formal usage generally employs the more logical *seem(s) unable*. (M.M.B.)

Q. The expression *can't help but* is heard frequently. Is it now good usage?

A. *Can't help but* in sentences like "I *can't help but* feel that he is interested himself" has come about from confusing the formal "I *can but* feel that . . ." and "I *cannot help* feel that. . ." It is objected to by some on the basis of being a double negative, but it is commonly used in informal English and frequently occurs in the best writers of England and America. The *OED*, *WNID*, and *WNWD* accept the expression. The recommended and more frequent form, however, for formal English is "I *cannot help thinking* that it is true." Kierzek in the *Macmillan Handbook* remarks, "You may avoid difficulties if you say *cannot help admiring . . .*" but Jespersen states that in England it is customary to use the construction with the gerund ("cannot help *admiring, singing, etc.*"), whereas in America the negative expression with *but* is preferred. (M.M.B.)

Q. Will you explain the different uses of *it* and distinguish between them? (M.L.H.)

A. There is *it* as the personal pronoun, third person, singular, as in "I shall sign *it*." Then there is the anticipatory *it*, placed first in the sentence, always followed by a singular verb and a group of words (an infinitive with its complements, a clause, etc.) represented by *it*: "*It* rests with her to make the decision." The logical subject is "to make the decision." (*It*, sometimes called the expletive, the "filler-in," may be omitted: "To

make the decision rests with her." The pattern of beginning a sentence with *it* and letting the real subject follow later is very common in current English, particularly in Standard English.

Anticipatory *it* is often used for emphasizing the logical subject by delaying it as in "*It was Mary who painted the picture*" (here the predicate has been made into a subordinate clause); or of emphasizing the object or complement by bringing it forward: "*It was David [obj.] they admired*"; "*It's a eulogy [comp.], this speech.*"

*It* is also often employed in an impersonal sense, as in "*It is raining*," "*It is said that . . .*" Since *it* does not refer to a definite person or thing, it is termed "impersonal." Almost all expressions concerning weather are put in this curious fashion. One cannot say, unless poetically, "The thunder thundered." This group of weather verbs, for the most part, has always been impersonal in English. In Gothic, the oldest Gmc. language, no *it* was expressed, but the speakers of OE and Ger. seemed to feel the need of an expressed subject even though it had no meaning. The insertion of *it* made the statement fit into the ordinary pattern of the declarative sentence with an expressed subject in its normal position before the verb.

There are also many uses of *it* which are not really the impersonal use, but are acceptable English, as in "How far is *it* to Los Angeles?" "*It* is a long distance." These uses may be termed "indefinite." Likewise, *it* often begins a sentence which does not have a definite antecedent, as in "A young man should have a good liberal education. *It* is not enough, however, that he should have a liberal education; he must have specific training as well for a particular position."

Then there are a number of idiomatic expressions employed in informal, colloquial English where an impersonal *it* functions as the object of the verb: "You two must have

*it* out some day"; "Go *it*"; "You will catch *it* if you don't get home soon"; "He hoofed *it* across the cornfield." There are also a number of prepositional phrases where the indefinite *it* functions in remarks like: "Make a night of *it*"; "Make a clean breast of *it*"; "He is in for *it*." (M.M.B.)

Q. Is *rarely ever* considered good usage?

A. The formal English expression is *rarely if ever*: "*I rarely if ever go to the beach.*" In informal English the expression has been telescoped to *rarely ever*: "*I rarely ever go to the beach.*" This simplified combination is now an established colloquial idiom, according to the Thorndike-Barnhart CDD. In formal English the *ever* is omitted, giving "*I rarely go to the beach.*" Another expression in formal English is "*I rarely or never go to the beach*," but not "*I rarely or ever go to the beach*" nor "*I rarely or hardly ever go . . .*" Prefer "*I rarely go*" or "*I hardly ever go.*" *Rarely* may also be used predicatively in a sentence after the verb *to be*: "*It is rarely that one sees such beauty.*" (M.M.B.)

Q. What is the preferable idiom to be used in referring to receiving a diploma from an institution? Is it *to be graduated from*?

A. The idiom *to be graduated from* as in "*He was graduated from Princeton University in 1955*" is not heard very much in current English. The Thorndike-Barnhart CDD states that it has "generally gone out of use except in formal and somewhat archaic writing, replaced by *graduated from*," as in "*He graduated from Princeton . . .*" One also hears in certain sections the telescoped expression *to graduate college*, as: "*He graduated college this year.*" This provincial construction is more common in the Middle Atlantic area, especially in cities like Philadelphia and New York. (M.M.B.)

## News and Ideas

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT decisions for English teachers in recent years is the University of Illinois Plan, described by Professor Charles W. Roberts, Chairman of Freshman Rhetoric, as follows:

The University of Illinois recently announced a revision of its policies and procedures regarding Freshman Rhetoric. For many years, the University has offered a remedial, non-credit course for freshmen who fail a rhetoric proficiency test given all new students. On 20 December 1955, the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation of the University Senate that this course, Rhetoric 100, be discontinued after the 1960 summer session.

The four-year period between the announcement and the inauguration of the new policy will give all concerned ample opportunity to adjust to the change. An Illinois high school freshman of 1956 can, in the four years that lie ahead, so apply himself to his English work that he will be ready to assume the role of college freshman in 1960.

Professor Roberts recommended the change in policy for these reasons:

We are faced with unprecedented increases in enrollment at the college level and must, in sheer self-defense, reserve our teacher and classroom resources for properly qualified students. We simply cannot afford to continue to give a high-school-level course in English in addition to our full college-level course offerings. Moreover, the University can hardly ask the taxpayers of the state to buy again from us the sort of elementary composition instruction they thought they were buying in their tax investment in their local schools. Certainly laboring to get eighteen-year-old young men and women to tell the difference between *their* and *there* is not the proper business of higher education, and that is the sort of instruction we now have to offer in Rhetoric 100.

In my twenty-six years of work with Freshman Rhetoric at the University of Illinois, I have not seen a more opportune time than the present in which to straighten out the lines of responsibility in English instruction in the entire public school system. The good sense of public school administrators is beginning to assert itself. Absurd and debasing educational philosophies which have plagued English teachers for some years are now fast losing favor.

THE RECRUITING AND EDUCATION of teachers—a problem that the U.S. seems to be gradually awaking to—is the subject of most of the articles in the March *Phi Delta Kappan*, the journal of the professional fraternity for men in education.

ACADEMIC QUIDNUNCNS WILL FIND a superior source of news about policy decisions in The Reporter department of the monthly *Journal of Higher Education*, published by Ohio State.

THE REVIVED *EXERCISE EXCHANGE*, edited by Thomas Wilcox (Bennington) and now published by Rinehart at \$1 a year, is smaller but just as helpful. The December issue contains problems or questions on Emerson, James, and Hopkins, plus an examination for an American Literature survey course, and a most practical method (by Braddock of Iowa S.T.C., Cedar Falls) of forcing poor spellers to improve. The February issue enjoys contributions from such different institutions as Washington State, Harvard, Kansas S.T.C. (Emporia), Amherst, Kent State, and Bennington.

LAST YEAR, THE UNIVERSITY OF Kansas held two workshops—on Childhood Education and on Composition and Literature in High School and College. Summaries may be procured by writing Oscar M. Haugh, 209 Bailey Hall, Lawrence, Kansas.

IN HIS REPORT FOR 1954-55, PRESIDENT Nathan M. Pusey of Harvard stressed a note which we are hearing sounded more and more, and with good reason:

Today, only forty per cent of all college teachers have earned the Ph.D. degree. It is estimated that by 1970 this percentage will have declined to twenty. . . . There were nearly 9,000 new Ph.D.'s coming from all universities in the United States a year ago. By no means all of . . . the 9,000 will become college or university teachers. Furthermore, the annual need for the teaching profession alone is now estimated at 20,000. These figures will be sufficient to suggest that for the sake of all the professions, and for the continued play of ideas, and



of high purpose and informed skill in our national life, the graduate schools of arts and sciences throughout the land must now either be enlarged or multiplied, and in either event, strengthened; for it is upon their products in a very special sense that the continued quality of the whole professional enterprise depends.

THE FIRST VERSION OF FAULKNER's *Sanctuary*, the one which the writer rejected as unworthy of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, is skilfully recounted by Linton Massey (who owns one of the six sets of the original galley-proofs) in the 1956 *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia*, Vol. 8. Massey also shows the amazing extent of the changes Faulkner made, reflecting "the labors of a proud, sensitive, and, at this stage of his career, an almost desperate craftsman."

VALUES OF THE COLLEGE GENERATION and what they signify are considered in an excellent article by Clarke A. Chambers (Minnesota) in the Winter *Colorado Quarterly*. Unlike many of the journalistic essays on the Silent or Beat Generation, this one is based on concrete—if admittedly limited—evidence: over 250 informal essays written by undergraduates on the nature of man and on human progress. Chambers' conclusions indicate that students today find themselves highly deterministic, but the conclusions are carefully qualified and should be so read.

VIRGINIA WOOLF IS THE SUBJECT of five articles and a checklist of criticism in the special February number of *Modern Fiction Studies* (Purdue).

DOING RESEARCH IN RENAISSANCE drama? You'll be interested in a survey of the opportunities, prepared after the 1955 MLA conference on the subject. Write to Samuel Schoenbaum at Northwestern.

INTERESTED IN SALARIES? N.B. the comment of Morton Raub (in *Antioch Notes* for February) on the recent Ford Foundation's "Largest gift in the history of

philanthropy": "So long as the college teacher regards a \$220 raise as a welcome supplement to his \$5,500 salary, the 'plight' will be with us. But if he considers it as only a small move along the road from \$5,500 to an expected salary of \$11,000, then he may be on his way towards an economic position that will bring him dignity and peace of mind."

THE FOURTH ANNUAL WORKSHOP for College Professors will be held at Michigan, 25 June-13 July, with Examiner Bloom (Chicago), Dean Kille (Carleton), and Chairman McDowell (Minnesota) as featured visiting leaders. Write Algo D. Henderson, 2442 U.E.S., Ann Arbor, for further information.

DON'T MISS GRANVILLE HICKS'S "Thoughts in a Small-Town Library," in the Spring *American Scholar*.

THE APRIL *ATLANTIC* IS LADEN with literary items—Arthur Miller's Harvard speech on "The Family in Modern Drama," a fine poem by Theodore Roethke, an episode from a Katherine Anne Porter novel in progress, a short Euripidean poem by Richard Hubler, and Carl Carmer's memoir of Vachel Lindsay.

AFTER FOUR YEARS, THE LIBRARY of Congress has a Poetry Consultant—Randall Jarrell, poet, novelist, critic, and teacher (Woman's College of U.N.C.).

THIRTY OF GILBERT HIGHET'S BOMC radio talks are now available from NCTE headquarters at fifty cents. These gentle yet penetrating, urbane yet informal discussions of literature and the arts range from Shakespeare in Italy in Charles Ives's music, imitators of Marquand, and university eccentrics.

INTRO BULLETIN FOR MARCH-April has two helpfully frank features—an interview with Ray Bradbury and a review of readings at the N.Y. Poetry Center.

# Ringling the Changes

*Thou art not for the fashion of these times,  
Where none will sweat but for promotion,  
And having that, do choke their service up  
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.*

SHAKESPEARE

## INSTRUCTORSHIPS

William A. Coles, University of Virginia, from Harvard University. Robert N. Ganz, Jr., Yale University, from Harvard University. John C. Weston, Jr., University of Virginia, from University of North Carolina.

## ASSISTANT PROFESSORSHIPS

Cyrus Hoy, Vanderbilt University, from University of Virginia.

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIPS

Eliot D. Allen, University of Massachusetts. Sears Jayne, University of Virginia, from University of California. Edward Stone, Ohio University, from University of Virginia.

## PROFESSORSHIPS

Charles W. Dunn, New York University, from University of Toronto. George Foster, Washington and Lee University. Rowland Nelson, Washington and Lee University. Marvin B. Perry, Washington and Lee University. Karl Shapiro, University of Nebraska, from University of California (Davis). Hyatt H. Waggoner, Brown University, from University of Kansas City.

## LECTURESHIPS

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, San Francisco State College, from Montana State University.

## CHAIRMANSHIPS

Maxwell H. Goldberg, University of Massachusetts; Executive Director, College English Association, from Executive Secretary. Louis L. Martz, Yale University.

## DEANSHIPS

Glenn J. Christensen, Lehigh University.

*This department welcomes information (from department heads or individuals) about changes in the status of any college English teacher. Send a postcard to College English, 530 Cabell Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.*

## FELLOWSHIPS

Edwin Engel, University of Michigan (Summer Faculty). Cecil Y. Lang, Yale University (Morse). Eric Stockton, University of Michigan (Summer Faculty). Marshall Waingrow, Yale University (Morse). David Weimer, University of Michigan (Summer Faculty). Richard B. Young, Yale University (Morse).

## TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Edith Aney, University of Stockholm, from Ohio University. Robeson Bailey, University of Massachusetts, from Smith College (Visiting Professor). Cesar L. Barber, University of Massachusetts, from Amherst College (Visiting Professor). Rufus Bellamy, University of Massachusetts, from Amherst College (Visiting Instructor). Elaine T. Smith, University of Massachusetts (Visiting Instructor).

## SUMMER APPOINTMENTS AWAY

Warren Beck, University of Colorado, from Lawrence College. James Sledd, University of Michigan, from University of Chicago.

## RETIREMENTS

C. N. Mackinnon, Ohio University. H. H. Peckham, Ohio University. Hyder E. Rolins, Harvard University. Stith Thompson, Indiana University.

## HONORARY DEGREES

Warren Beck, Lawrence College, Lit.D. from Earlham College. Frank Prentice Rand, L.H.D., from University of Massachusetts.

## DEATHS

Arthur B. Lieble, Indiana University, 9 November 1955, aged 63. Robert Morss Lovett, University of Chicago, February 1956, aged 85. Stanley T. Williams, Yale University, 11 February 1956, aged 67.

# New Books

## Poetry

AS IF: POEMS NEW AND SELECTED, John Ciardi (Rutgers, 1955, 143 pp., \$3.50). Ciardi's fifth volume of verse has the hallmark of an old hand's work: the choice of the previously published poems and of the uncommitted ones so as to make harmony—without the pretentiousness of a *Collected* or *Selected* label. Indeed, Professor Ciardi (Rutgers) makes his title serve as an esthetic: "IS is the mode of prose. Poetry is AS IF's reality." This works out beautifully in a Stevensian poem like "Two Egrets" or in the "Fragment of a Bas Relief" (an ima-

gist summary of Keats's "Urn"). But there is something supremely realistic—in the ordinary sense—about much of this poet's best work—in his eight war poems, his five poems on married love (a better sequence than Rossetti's, whose title enters unobtrusively), his fine "Sunday Morning" prayer, his snarling "Domesticity" and "Lines While Walking Home." This is not to deny the Ciardian emphasis on his own self-discovery in poetry through imagined self-possibilities, but to emphasize how apprehensible these good poems are to every reader.

## Bibliography and Reference

THE NEW CENTURY HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, ed. Clarence L. Barnhart and William D. Halsey (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1956, 1167 pp., \$12). 14,000 entries, actually not restricted to British writing but covering Western history, literature, and culture. "The first book of its kind which has been edited by Ameri-

cans for the American reader," which means, in part, that complete pronunciations are given. Every Shakespearean play and character gets a reasonably fuller entry, as well as the major characters and works from Chaucer to Shaw. Altogether a valuable reference work.

## Literary Texts and Analytical Bibliography

THE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Harvard 1955, 3 vols., 1334 pp., \$25). The unique history of the Dickinson texts and the uniqueness of this edition may justify three notes additional to Henry W. Wells's long review in the Dec. 1955 *CE*. (1) The only notable blemish on the *Poems* as a working edition is that the Index of First Lines includes the number of the poem and the number of the page but not the number of the volume, which means that the scholar-reader must make up his own table and apply each reference to it (Vol. I: Poems 1-494, pp. 1-378; Vol. II: Poems 495-1176, pp. 379-820; Vol. III: Poems 1179-1775, pp. 821-1186). (2) One wishes that Johnson (Lawrenceville School) could have extended his explanatory notes. If he could gloss, for example, "Van Dieman's Land" in Poem 511 and "the

lone British Lady" in Poem 851, why should he not, for example, settle the syntax of "Herself" in Poem 729 or of the "He" in line 15 of Poem 348? Teachers, students, and critics could surely profit by such assistance, which a man who has spent as much time with Emily's sentence structure as has Johnson could surely provide with some authority. (3) In addition to the handy edition called for by Wells, what the reader and student of Emily Dickinson now needs most is a good, old-fashioned commentary on and explication of the complete poems, based on this definitive text—something for him to be enlightened by or to disagree with. The numerous explanations of "Because I could not stop for Death," for example, are superseded in the light of the new fourth stanza and other restorations (Johnson's biography analyzes the restored poem helpfully), and

there are probably other poems that will admit of fairly final description on the basis of this final text.

**STUDIES IN BIBLIOGRAPHY: PAPERS OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**, ed. Fredson Bowers (Vol. VIII, Charlottesville, 1956). Some day an edition of Shakespeare will reproduce, as closely as scientific bibliography can determine, what Shakespeare actually wrote. Each volume of these *Studies* brings the day a little closer; the latest contains six articles concerned with Shakespearian editing. The first, by the late Philip Williams, Jr., emphasizes the necessity of an editor's knowledge of the textual problems of several of the plays, not merely of the one he may be editing, and demonstrates the importance of compositor analysis. *Henry VIII*, for example, was set by two compositors of very different habits in their treatment of copy. Before assigning certain passages to Fletcher on the basis of his preference for *ye* over *you*, a scholar would find it useful, to say the least, to know that one compositor was four times as fond of *ye* than was his fellow worker. Arthur Brown discusses problems faced by editors of semi-popular editions of Shakespeare. His plea for a deep sense of responsibility is surely justified when we consider the thousands of readers who receive their first, last-

ing, and possibly last impression of Shakespeare from any text that comes to hand. Scholars cannot damage one another irreparably, but editors of Shakespeare for general circulation have enormous scope for good or evil. Of the twenty articles following, some are pretty hard going for readers unversed in analytical bibliography, though any scholar can profitably read them as models of careful reasoning based on exact evidence. To name only two, Paul L. Cantrell and George W. Williams offer new information concerning the compositors of *Titus Andronicus* Q2 (1600); Fredson Bowers, in the first installment of a study of *Hamlet* Q1 and Q2, surveys the consequences of Dover Wilson's preference for Q2 and examines in detail Alice Wilson's theory concerning the printer's copy for the Folio. The majority of these studies are less technical, and they cover a wide range. Simms, Hawthorne, Whitman, and Faulkner receive attention, the last from Linton Massey, whose examination of the unrevised galleys of *Sanctuary* yield a fascinating account of how an inept, poorly planned first version became a novel brilliant in narrative technique and unified in theme. The volume contains a selective list of bibliographical scholarship for 1954. As usual, the typography, paper, and binding delight the eye.

LOUIS F. PECK

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

### Literary History and Criticism

**THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SAMUEL JOHNSON**, Walter Jackson Bate (Oxford, 1955, 248 pp., \$4.50). Professor Bate of Harvard explores in this warmly personal and sympathetic book Johnson's humane "feats of mind," both ethical and literary. The book is neither a biography nor the standard kind of scholarly or critical performance; it is instead a closely reasoned psychological and moral defense of Johnson's primary methods of thought and feeling, and, at the same time, a penetrating examination of the strikingly un-Johnsonian rigidities and excesses of certain tendencies in romantic and contemporary criticism. It is hard to say which of his jobs Professor Bate does better—his attempt to renovate Johnson's reputation as a consistent foe of mere systems and extrinsic critical inflexi-

bilities, or his effort to remind modern scholars and critics of the degree to which, on occasion, they have been forgetful of Johnson's critical virtues at the cost of their own critical health. Even when he is engaged in setting right the most outrageous nineteenth and twentieth-century misrepresentations of Johnson's methods, the author never becomes strident or petulant: all is carried on in the tone of the very wise and sophisticated moderation which is being recommended. The book will be appreciated not only by professional Johnsonians but by all who can still find delight and refreshment in such phenomena as the author's use of the term *nobility* without either apology or definition.

PAUL FUSSELL, JR.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

POPE'S DUNCIAD; A STUDY OF ITS MEANING, Aubrey L. Williams (Louisiana State, 1955, 162 pp., \$3). Mr. Williams' book strikingly illustrates the vitality and relevance of the rhetorical approach to literature, especially as applied to eighteenth-century satire. The author has skillfully assimilated the critical positions of his mentors and associates at Yale, notably W. K. Wimsatt, Cleanth Brooks, and Maynard Mack; the result is a penetrating reevaluation of the *Dunciad* as a work of art. By examining Pope's monumental parody in its relations both to the *Aeneid* and to *Paradise Lost*, and by fitting it into the rhetorical tradition of *Praise of Folly* and *Gulliver's Travels*, Mr. Williams is able to offer arresting new perspectives. His contribution is less in communicating new information than in clearing away the underbrush of irrelevant attitudes toward Pope's "libels," to reveal an impressive symmetry of structure and timelessness of theme. In the final form of the *Dunciad*, "The dunces endure a type of historical death and imaginative transfiguration." The poem emerges from these pages as genuinely humanistic, though not especially humane, and as a brilliant example of the Augustan passion against the general corrosion of society threatened by "dulness." Although the book is not entirely free from trailing tendrils of the dissertation, it has clarity and style.

BRUCE DEARING

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

THE MAJOR SATIRES OF ALEXANDER POPE, Robert W. Rogers (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature: Vol. 40, 1955, 163 pp., \$4, \$3 paper). In his Preface, Mr. Rogers (of Illinois) states that "we need to remind ourselves that satire may . . . be a very great art" at the same time that he declares his main purpose to be an exposition of the ethical foundations of Pope's satire. The book itself accomplishes both more and less than the Preface seems to promise. The author systematically diversifies his approaches to the individual works (*The Dunciad*, the *Essay on Man* and the *Ethic Epistles*, and the *Imitations of Horace*), detailing the circumstances and motives of composition, defining the ethical goals, and incidentally subjecting parts or

whole poems to some sound critical analysis. All of this makes for a useful reference work for the teacher of Pope, who nevertheless may hold out against the author's ultimate justification of Pope's satires on the basis of "essentially honest intentions" and "salutary and sane" views, the result, it appears, of too clinging a loyalty to the ethical approach. We still need to be reminded that satire may be a very great art.

MARSHALL WAINGROW

YALE UNIVERSITY

THE POETIC WORKMANSHIP OF ALEXANDER POPE, Rebecca Price Parkin (Minnesota, 1955, 239 pp., \$4). Mrs. Parkin's study is a product of what may be called a neo-Aristotelian school of eighteenth-century studies, a school which has been concerned with the rhetoric of such writers as Swift and Pope. There are, of course, limitations in this narrow focus; for the central concern is how things are said rather than what is said, and the meaning of isolated passages often becomes more important than the meaning of a complete poem. Nevertheless, those who have worked this critical vein have made significant contributions. The writings of Maynard Mack, Geoffrey Tillotson, William B. Ewald, Jr., Martin Price, and others have been distinguished by ingenuity, shrewdness, and critical insight; and they have done much to destroy the commonplace observation that eighteenth-century literature bears only surface meaning. The study by Mrs. Parkin illustrates the strength as well as the weaknesses of the approach. It contains a detailed analysis of the varied rhetorical techniques which Pope employed again and again in his work, the implied dramatic speaker, irony, parallelism, metaphor, tonal variation, and the like. Because she adheres to reasonably fixed ideas about the nature of these techniques, she is less inclined to drift away from a subject in hand. Because she is a sensitive critic who has read Pope carefully, her interpretations are often penetrating. Her enthusiasm for Pope's poetry is also refreshing; but her admiration sometimes leads to unreliable critical judgments. No useful purpose is, for example, served by the absurd generalization that "nineteenth-century poets, moreover, tended on



the whole to produce a thin verse with only one meaning"—or by the statement that Pope's echo of the Biblical line "Let there be light, and there was light" in the *Dunciad* ("Light dies before thy uncreating word," IV, 654) is "one of the most powerful things a writer in the West European Christian tradition could have done." This is a book which everyone interested in English literature ought to read for its shrewd analyses and interpretations; but the value judgments must be read with caution.

ROBERT W. ROGERS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

PERSONIFICATION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH POETRY, Chester F. Chapin (King's Crown,

1955, 175 pp., \$3). This brief excursion into the theory and practice of eighteenth-century personification conducts us through vast thickets of dissertation jargon and periphrasis to bring us, finally, to what one had supposed was a commonplace: that Pope, Collins, and Johnson invest their personifications with a strangely compelling original vitality and that many of the tedious third-raters of the age do not. But despite this lack of distinction in both style and depth of penetration, Mr. Chapin's discussion is managed with sufficient judiciousness, sobriety, and learning to make it a trustworthy, if unexciting, introduction to the subject.

PAUL FUSSELL, JR.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

## Literary Biography

EMILY DICKINSON: AN INTERPRETIVE BIOGRAPHY, Thomas H. Johnson (Harvard, 1955, 276 pp., \$4.50). By the time he finished the definitive edition of the poems, Mr. Johnson (Lawrenceville School) must have been so full of his subject that it overflowed into a short biography. Since Emily's life is most uninteresting, and since the Whicher and Chase biographies had already done wonders for it, one questions the need for another life. Fortunately, Johnson is very good on explaining the meaning and significance of certain individual poems and on such topics as the poet's use of traditional hymnology; and since the subject's death occurs halfway through the biography, one is grateful for this critical material while wishing for more.

POET AND PSYCHIATRIST: MERRILL MOORE, M.D.: A CRITICAL PORTRAIT WITH AN APPRAISAL OF TWO HUNDRED OF HIS POEMS, Henry W. Wells (Twayne, 1955, 325 pp., \$5). The poetry of Merrill Moore has amazed many, pleased some, and irritated Yvor Winters, who has said that "one may expect to be pardoned for refusing to take his art any more seriously than he has taken it." Mr. Winters to the contrary notwithstanding, Moore takes poetry very seriously. To question that he takes his own poetry

seriously is irrelevant, and to say, as Mr. Winters does in the same passage, that "Moore has written badly with a deliberate intention" is effrontery. Perhaps Mr. Winters means that Moore does not write poetry of a high seriousness. This is true. Moore has written thousands of sonnets, more sonnets than have been written by all the other poets of history taken together. This fecundity has moved the admiring Dudley Fitts to call Moore a "life-force," but it has bogged most critics, and few there are who have considered so many of his poems one by one as has Professor Wells (of Columbia) in this extended critical essay, interspersed with tantalizingly brief biographical passages. Among Mr. Wells's many, uneven, highly individual, and highly debatable interpretations, a few helpful observations stand out. But they are minor. Mr. Wells meanders from one notion to another and generalizes and theorizes so freely that we are soon lost in the thickets of random reaction. Moore deserves better than this. His stream of consciousness flows in the special sonnet style he has developed. He is colloquial, candid, loose; at times unrhymed and otherwise unconventional—or even idiosyncratic. But you'd be surprised how good he is.

WALTER H. ELLIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

## Translations

GERMAN STORIES AND TALES, ed. Robert Pick (Pocket Library, 1955, 399 pp., \$35 paper). Courses in Modern German Literature in translation will find here a dozen stories cheaply available. Hesse: *Youth, Beautiful Youth*, Mann: *Death in Venice*, Kafka: *The Metamorphosis*, Broch: *Zerline*, and Schnitzler: *The Bachelor's Death*, are adequately characteristic. Hofmannsthal's *Episode . . . de Bassompierre*, Wassermann's *Lukardis*, and five tales by lesser lights complete the twentieth-century roster. From the previous century Keller, Stifter, Brentano and Johann Peter Hebel join the company. The editor's reason: "I tried to put myself in the place of a person eager to listen to a teller of tales. . . ." Good reading forms the anthology's connective link, otherwise, subjectively, disjointed.

C. GRANT LOOMIS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

NATHAN THE WISE, G. E. Lessing, trans. Bayard Q. Morgan; MEMOIRS OF A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING, Joseph von Eichendorff, trans. Bayard Q. Morgan; A VILLAGE ROMEO AND JULIET, Gottfried Keller, trans. Paul Bernard Thomas (Ungar, 1955, \$2.50; .95, paper). Teachers of English and American literature whose fields of interest and areas of instruction include general, or world, and comparative literature should warmly welcome the inauguration of a new series of representative specimens of foreign literature in English translation. While it is announced that "Works from several languages will be included as the series progresses," the first three titles all represent masterpieces of German literature: a classic drama—or, more precisely, "A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts"—from the eighteenth century and two of the foremost *Novellen* of the nineteenth century. Lessing's eloquent homily on religious and racial tolerance, which for obvious reasons received a showing on Broadway early in American participation in the Second World War and which has since been restored to the standard repertory of the German theater, is of interest to teachers of English as the earliest German drama of significance to show Shakespeare's influence in the employment of

blank verse. Eichendorff's story, redolent of romanticism with its motifs of *Mondnacht*, *Nachtigallen*, and *Wanderlust*, affords illustration of some of the characteristics of German romanticism for students of other manifestations of the movement. Keller's tale, reminiscent in title of Shakespeare's play, serves to show, as the author observes, "how deeply rooted in human life is each of those plots on which the great works of the past are based." Competent, even distinguished, translation is promised by the participation as editor of the series, as translator of two of the volumes, and as collaborator in the translation of the third, of Bayard Quincy Morgan, veteran translator, promoter of the art of translation, and compiler of the authoritative bibliography of German literature in English translation. Fulfillment of this promise has been determined through use of Professor Morgan's procedure in preparing his critical bibliography: "a careful comparison of some portion of the translation with the corresponding passage of the original."

PHILIP A. SHELLEY

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

THE DIVINE COMEDY, trans. and ed. Thomas G. Bergin (Crofts Classics, 348 pp. \$95, paper). For two very important reasons, this edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy* should rank as the most important of the recent translations. The first has to do with the translation itself. Taking clarity and simplicity as his professed aims, Bergin succeeds both in the text and in his competent notes. More important is his approach to the poem as an artistic whole. Greater, obviously, than the sum of its parts, the poem has too often been treated as one built around the first third. The stress Bergin lays upon the climactic function of Dante's confession in the *Purgatorio* and his emphasis, not upon the faults of the *Paradiso*, but upon its truly unearthly beauty and purpose, are very welcome. The *Paradiso*, as Bergin affirms, is one of "the most noble and coherent of all the dreams of aspiring mankind." And it is good to have an edition which brings this unity of purpose sharply before us.

CHARLES A. HERRING

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

## Recordings

*FROM LEAVES OF GRASS*, David Allen (Poetry Records, PR 300, 12-inch LP). Mr. Allen's fine voice handles a challenging poet well, both on short pieces and one long one, "When Lilacs Last." It may be a matter of taste that would prefer the full-length "Out of the Cradle" instead of the 22 lines allotted here and instead of the diffuse "When Lilacs Last," but one cannot quarrel with the way Mr. Allen sustains the Whitman message, "pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road."

"NO SINGLE THING ABIDES," David Allen (Poetry Records, PR 202, 10-inch LP). A reading, with occasional musical backgrounds, of a half-dozen poems (one is

a piece of poetic prose) "concerned with the indestructibility of man's spirit which survives the impermanence of his flesh": Donne's most famous prose passage, Keats's "When I Have Fears," Gray's "Elegy," a version of Chidioch Tichborne's only poem, Shelley's "Ozymandias," and—most unexpectedly—a long passage from Lucretius (Mallock translation). David Allen's voice and enunciation are excellent: there is not much variety to them, but the selections of course do not call for much. The sound effects—some, bells for Donne and Gray, an echo for Ozymandias' inscription, and so on—are tasteful and probably helpful to new students of poetry.

## Anthologies and Texts for Reading

*ANTHOLOGY OF JAPANESE LITERATURE*, ed. Donald Keene (Grove Press, 1955, 442 pp., \$6.50). This anthology of Japanese literature covers the period from 712 A.D., the date of the earliest surviving work, to the middle of the nineteenth century when Japan opened her doors to the West. A companion volume devoted to the literature following the Meiji Restoration is in preparation. The stated purpose of the compiler, who is Lecturer in Japanese at Cambridge, was to present the literature of Japan to Western readers in the most appealing way possible. To that end the translations, some made especially for this book, and all of them extremely readable, are more literary than precise (a short bibliography lists some translations of a more scholarly nature). The collection includes a fairly wide sampling of material, grouped according to political periods—plays, essays, stories, excerpts from diaries and novels, and a large amount of poetry (perhaps too much for the uninitiated foreign reader). Dr. Keene's twelve-page introduction and the notes prefacing the selections are valuable aids in fixing the works against their historical and artistic backgrounds and in tracing the development of Japanese literature.

ANNE GWYNN  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*POETRY OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD*, ed. George B. Woods and Jerome H. Buckley (Scott, Foresman, 1955, 1107 pp., \$6). A revision of the most comprehensive anthology in the field, this is the 1930 edition of Woods (American University) improved by consultation with Buckley of Columbia. It now contains even more: the complete *House of Life*, *Modern Love*, *Dream of Gerontius*, and *Wreck of the Deutschland*; plus a parallel chronology table, some bringing-up-to-date of the bibliographies, and an excellent set of pictures (a dozen Pre-Raphaelites, two Beerbohms, two Beardsleys, a page of cartoons, and some photographs.) If one wants all the significant poetry of Victorian England—the bad as well as the good—here it is.

*ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETRY AND PROSE*, ed. Russell Noyes (Oxford, 1956, 1323 pp., \$7.50). A handsome and handsomely done volume by Noyes (Indiana), covering the movement from Thomson (b. 1700 to R. S. Hawker (d. 1875), with emphasis on verse and letters, but with "passages from diaries, journals, biography, political tracts, and literary criticism," plus a little prose fiction. Features include the complete *Cenci*, humorous material, period headpieces and tailpieces, Thomas Paine, good Blake selection, well-distributed *Prel-*

ude passages, and much from the letters of Byron and Keats, in addition to appropriately detailed biographical outlines, critical bibliographies, headnotes, and footnotes. The print, paper, and binding are good. All in all, the edition might be said to be monumental.

**SHORT STORIES FOR STUDY: AN ANTHOLOGY**, ed. Raymond W. Short and Richard B. Sewall (Holt, 1956, 618 pp., \$3.25). This is the third edition of a popular collection, by Short of Hofstra and Sewall of Yale. The new stories are of mixed merit: to balance the beautiful language and humanity of Dylan Thomas and Frank O'Connor is the William Fain imitation of Hemingway's "My Old Man"; to balance the complex Kafka "Great Wall" and Melville "Bartleby" are the tricky Hawthorne "Higginbotham" and the corny Twain "Hadleyburg" (56 pp.). But the old stories still seem solid and teachable, and one type of teacher will appreciate the free hand given them by the absence of appa-

ratus (except biographical notes).

**WALT WHITMAN'S POEMS: SELECTIONS WITH CRITICAL AIDS**, ed. Gay Wilson Allen and Charles T. Davis (N.Y.U., 1955, 280 pp., \$3.75). One is tempted to nominate this book as the most puzzling scholarly work of the year 1955. In contrast to the helpful fifty-page "Introduction to a Critical Study" of Whitman's verse, the editors have reprinted forty poems with explications that are often either too ponderous or too sketchy for the poems in question. For instance, there are three pages of comment on "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun"—as transparent an item as there is in the canon—but only two and a half pages to Whitman's masterpiece, the complex "Out of the Cradle." And the same number of pages is assigned to "When Lilacs Last," which, say the editors, "Most critics agree" is "Whitman's most successful poem." And only five pages of commentary on the fifty-five-page "Song of Myself." Most puzzling.

## Composition and Communication

**GUIDE TO AMERICAN ENGLISH**, L. M. Myers (Prentice-Hall, 1955, 433 pp., \$3.25). If you are dissatisfied with traditional grammar and purist prescriptions, you might well try this liberal textbook in your Freshman Composition course. Part I, "On Language and Thinking," includes a deft discussion of the uses and limitations of logic. Some teachers may find Part II, "Grammar," a bit eccentric (e.g., pronouns consist of the personal pronouns and the pronoun *who*), and some linguists will regret that Professor Myers (Arizona State) is not aligned with Fries's epoch-making *Structure of English*. But the simple, undogmatic Myers grammar should suffice for a composition course in which grammar *per se* is not taught. Part III, "Problems in Writing," stresses such practical matters as letter-writing and vocabulary-building but is skimpy on rhetoric. Paragraph development is treated in less than four pages. Part IV, "Index to Usage," is highly praiseworthy, for both its compendiousness (111 pages) and its sound judgments.

EDWARD A. STEPHENSON  
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**HARBRACE GUIDE TO THE LIBRARY AND THE RESEARCH PAPER**, Donald A. Sears (Harcourt, Brace, 1956, \$1). This is a handbook that leaves nothing to the imagination. The reader, presumably the college freshman or sophomore, is led into the library through the front door and given a complete guided tour. By the time he emerges he has written a research paper on Samuel Johnson and his dictionary. The library section is strong in technical details and remarkably inclusive: the Dewey decimal system, the use of library indexes, the meaning of mysterious terms like preface, text, appendix. Exercises on tear sheets are provided. The section on "The Technique of the Research Paper" covers all mechanical matters from choice of topic to finished paper. The sample essay on Johnson, however, demonstrates an exercise of judgment and a grace of style whose secrets are not revealed in the instructions.

WILLIAM M. MURPHY  
UNION COLLEGE

THE ART OF EFFICIENT READING, George D. Spache and Paul C. Berg (Macmillan, 278 pp., \$3). Through concrete discussion in three sections—"Learning New Ways to Read" (8 chapters), "Tools for Vocabulary Growth" (3 chapters), and "Applying Reading Skills" (6 chapters)—two experienced University of Florida Reading Laboratory and Clinic members give specific directions for intensive, critical, rapid, and background reading; also for reading in the content fields of social science, science, literature, and mathematics. Reading selections and exercises on or supplementing the text offer ingenious self-practice and self-testing, with an answer key available. Designed for use with or without an instructor's aid, the manual should make the serious, conscientious student an efficient reader.

GEORGE S. WYKOFF

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

SHORT CUTS TO EFFECTIVE ENGLISH, Harry Shefter (Pocket Books, 1955, 286 pp., \$.35, paper). An ingenious method of teaching grammar and syntax without using the old terms, presumably successfully used by the author in both a New York high school and at N.Y.U. A brief teachers' guide is available.

EXPERIMENTS IN DICTION, RHETORIC, AND STYLE, John B. Lord (Rinehart, 1955, 392 pp., \$2.95, paper). A collection of examples of good and bad writing, discussion questions (hundreds of them) on the examples, and assignments based on the

examples and questions, the whole presented in work-book form. Professor Lord (of Washington State) has tested his inductive and synthetic methods for seven years, and the result is a rich book that both teachers and students should find easy and yet rewarding to use.

MODERN WRITING, Robert Smith and others (Arrowhead, 1955, 275 pp. \$7.50). In this textbook—the work of an experienced author, editor, and teacher (The Magazine Institute), and his staff of experts—the emphasis is largely on a listing and discussion of methods by which writers in various fields may achieve commercial success. In the first eight chapters Mr. Smith discusses almost every type of composition from the writing of an obituary notice to the development of a novel, devoting most of his space to a detailed study of the short story. The final section of the text, eighty-five pages, is given over to a supplementary symposium in which the experts offer advice on writing and marketing radio, movie, and television scripts, short stories for pulp and popular magazines, and cartoon gags. If the college teacher or student who regards writing as an art rather than a commercial enterprise can bear up under the patronizing tone, hackneyed phraseology, ponderous humor, and banal comments, he may come across fresh ideas and helpful suggestion here and there, but probably not enough to compensate for the effort expended.

JOHN C. COLEMAN

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA